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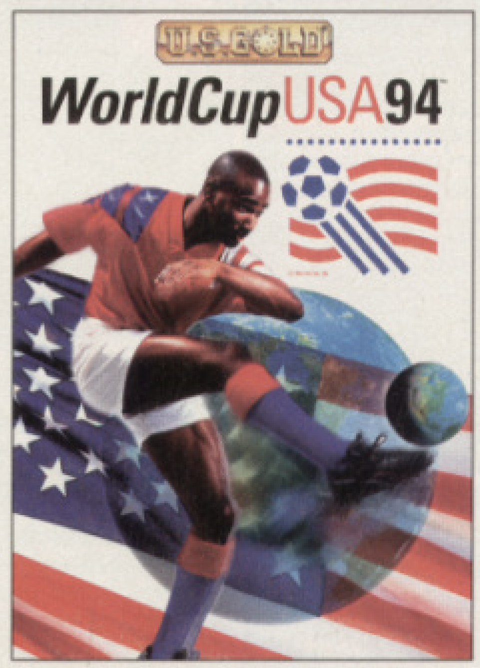
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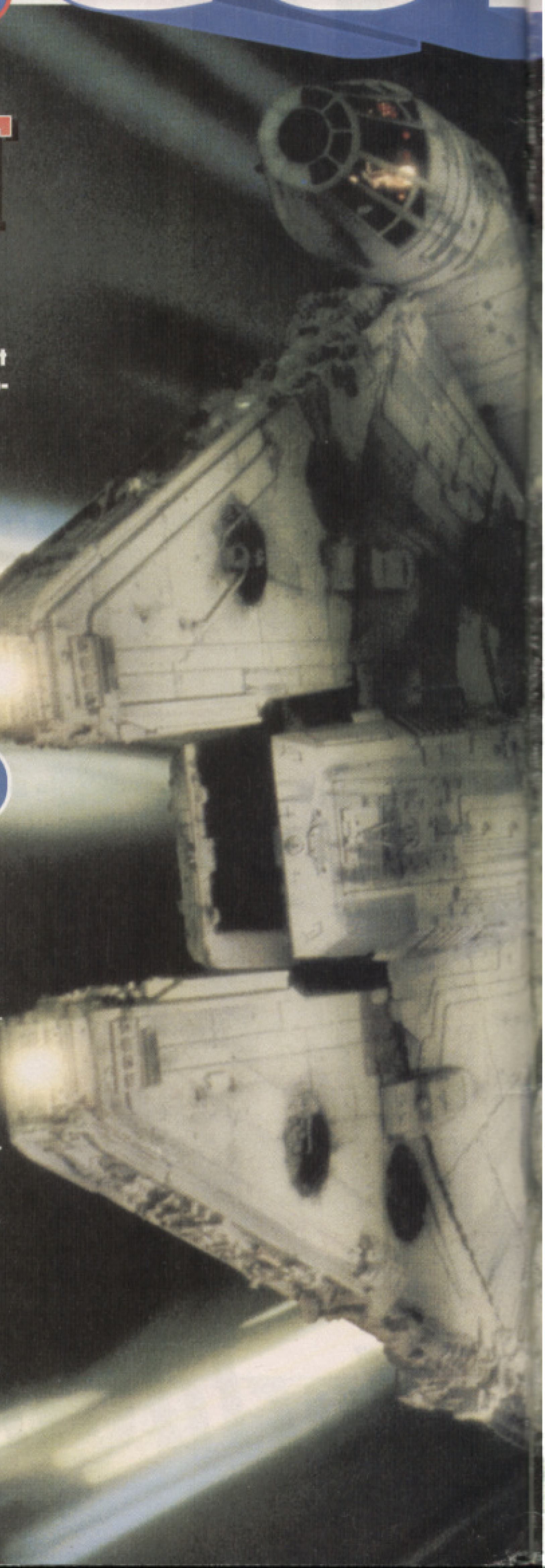
COVER STORY

EXCLUSIVE

MORTAL KOMBAT II



Last year's biggest game, Mortal Kombat, is this year's biggest news: the sequel. MEAN MACHINES SEGA has moved heaven and earth to secure the world exclusive look at the Sega versions of this monumental project. And, by Zeus, we have it.



REGULARS

FEATURES

NTENTS



PREVIEWS

REVIEWS

MEGADRIVE

MEGA-CD

MASTER SYSTEM

MASTER SYSTEM

EXCLUSIVE

REBEL ASSAULT
The PC CD-ROM game that is turning heads, and is now just a whisker away from a Mega-CD release. And in conjunction with JVC and Lucas Arts you are privileged enough to see the very first proper preview. Only in MEAN MACHINES SEGA. See page 46.

EDITO

WHODUNNIT

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COMPETITION RULES
The rules is...there ain't no rules. You takes your chances like the rest of us. Sorry, James Cagney lapse. Anyway, we don't let EMAP employees or their families win, because they could peak over Steve' shoulder and read the dead difficult answers.

GREAT UNANSWERED QUESTIONS OF OUR TIME: Nos 3 and 4
3. BBC TV's The Net. Why? 4. Are the guests in the Ferrero Rocher ad taking the mick out of the 'Ambassador'?

THE DINGBATS MESSAGE
(For self-indulgent DTP types and their QuarkXpress-type cohorts and enemies)



We're feeling rather pleased with ourselves this month. As you've probably seen on the front cover and the brilliant Acclaim special bagged with this issue, we've scooped everyone to the hottest game of the year — Acclaim's Mortal Kombat II. Yep, we were the first people outside of Acclaim themselves to get a peek at the eagerly-awaited conversion, and by golly it's looking good. We didn't just stop there, either. Rebel Assault finally fell into our grasp for a last-gasp preview — a proper one, too, none of this nicking shots from American mags! On the whole, it has been a good month for games. We've seen Urban Strike, Accolade's newies (and a very early Bubsy II's looking smart, too), and Probotector and Micro Machines II were so promising we went back for more! And that's without even mentioning our look at the first 32bit titles. Basically, this a really smart time to own a Megadrive. The software scene has never looked so promising, and we're the only mag who can give you a full overview of what's happening — none of this 'two screenshots equates a four-page preview' crap here, mateys. If you want the most up-to-date info on the Sega scene, you've got it in your hands. Why bother with anything else?
See you next month...
Steve

RELIEF

Is there no depths to which readers will stoop to get a mention in our super soaraway Editorial? Having no truck with gutter journalism, we can only say how disgusted we were to receive this picture (which we filed under 'Fat Clark Kent Craps his Whack'), from somewhere in Wales (well, that explains it). Tell us what you think of our 'page five fella'.



GHOULISH SPECTACLE

A company called Gepro asked us to promote this tasty little item, a 'breakthrough in optical technology'. 'Stop the invisible killer!' it says on the press release, 'provides 99.99% protection from harmful radiation'. You' re meant to wear these when playing your deadly Megadrive. At MEAN MACHINES we also recommend you wear them when using the microwave, since everyone knows you get cancer of the eyeball if you look at it. Probably. And don't stand too close when you're doing baked potatoes.



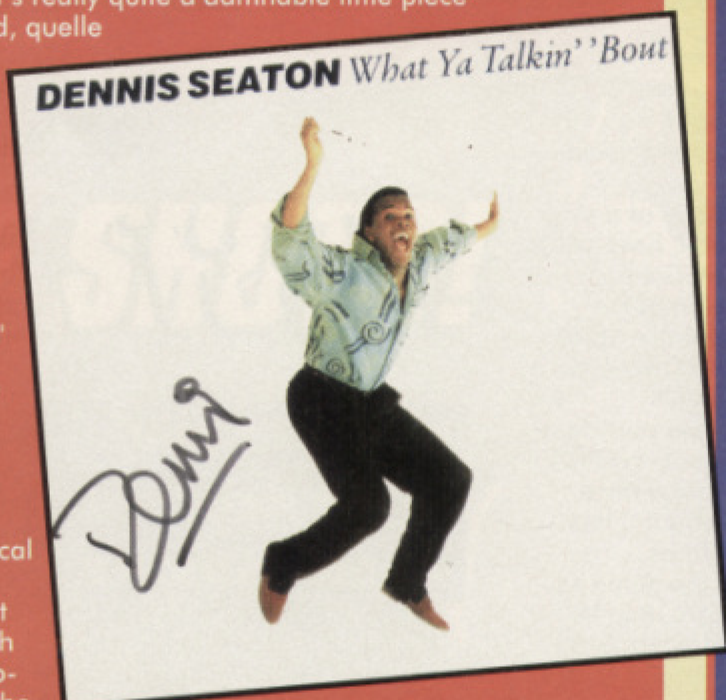
RIAL

SKIVVIES

This month Le team apply themselves to pop videos: whose would they like to appear in, and how would they change them.

MYSTERY MAN

Who is this man? More importantly, who can help his man? Vincent Bailey sent us a signed copy of Dennis Seaton singing 'What Ya Talkin' 'Bout' his not-so-hit single of a couple of years ago. It's really quite a damnable little piece of work. And, quelle horreur, it was produced by the once great Stevie Wonder. Can the man who made 'Superstition' really be behind this? We suspect the culprit was once in UK 'super group' Musical Youth who were one-hit wonders with the immemorable 'Pass the dutchy on the left-hand side'. Pass the razor blades more like. But please, keep sending crap CDs, tapes and vinyl for our amusement (please direct Wendy James records to Gus).



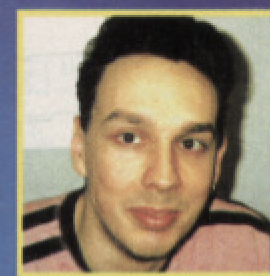
INFORMER

Welcome to Shop Your Parents — the part of the show where WE invite YOU to reveal the utter sadness of your elders and betters. This month: remote control curtains. Hard to believe, but you can get a handheld that controls your Draylon drapes, thus making that tiresome trek to the window a thing of the past. Have your parents been misguided enough to buy them? Let us now. in return we offer a little incentive.

AREN'T WE THE GREATEST?

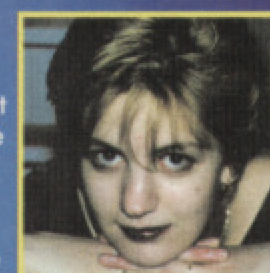
Dear Mean Machines,
I've noticed the remarkable similarity between your Streets of Rage III cover of March and the box artwork of the SOR3 game from Sega. Are they in any way related? I think we should be told.
ANSWER:Gentle reader, they are in fact one and the same. So impressed were Sega by the magnificence of our cover, that they bought the artwork for themselves. The artist is Simon Williams, and isn't he clever.

STEVE MERRETT



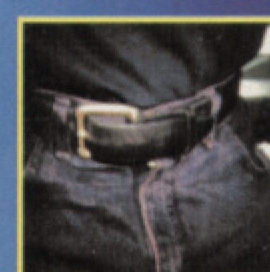
The Vid: 'I think we're alone now' by Tiffany, says Steve. 'I really liked it because it was set in all these interesting American shopping malls. Just like Dawn of the Dead, in fact, which is one of my favourite horror movies.'
Steve's improvement: When all the shoppers are watching Tiffany strut her stuff, you see me in the crowd picking pockets and bag snatching.
CHOICE GAMES:Goal, Mortal II

LUCY HICKMAN



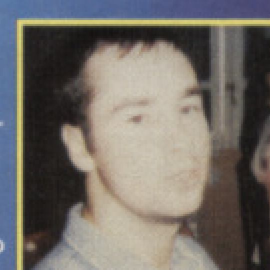
The Vid: 'It's my life', by Doctor All-bran. Actually, Lucy would prefer to be in the advert that uses this provocative theme. Women ride along the beach in skin-tight lycra and a woman gets excited playing football.
Lucy's improvement:I appear on roller-skates pulled by half a dozen rotweillers that savage anyone on the beach that gets in my way.
CHOICE GAMES:Star Trek NG, Micro Machines 2

OZ BROWNE



The Vid: 'Give me just a little more time' by Kylie Minogue. The Aussie star is in a cafe, and while waiting for a cappuccino and buttered scone she launches into a major song and dance warbling routine.
Oz's improvement: I'd be, like, the waiter or the barman, and I'd say 'cut that racket out, or I'll have to put you out — I've got other customers, you know'. And Kylie would be dead apologetic, and I'd say 'tuck yer blouse in girl, you look like a trollop'. (Oz likes Kylie).
CHOICE GAMES:Virtua Racing, Streets of Rage II

ANGUS SWAN



The Vid:'Deeper and Deeper' by Madonna. Ms Ciccone visits a really Seventies club in NYC, wearing a feather boa, has a few 'swallies' (drinks) and turns up her nose at all and sundry.
Gus' Improvement:Well I'd be there in penny round collar, Crimplene flares and other retro gear from Vivienne Westwood, and I'd look ten times better than Madonna, who would come out of the ladies with her skirt tucked into her knickers and we'd all laugh at her.
CHOICE GAMES:Virtua Racing, Skitchin'

CLAIRE COULTHARD

The Vid:'Pray' by Take That. Set on an isolated beach, prob. just outside Great Yarmouth. The boys temporarily lose control of their shirts, which frequently leave their bodies.



Claire's improvement:I turn up on the beach in espadrilles with a picnic box and a deck chair. And then Jason (the one nobody fancies — the beardy-weirdy) stands on a jellyfish and I apply some Savlon to it, and we get to talking, and eventually go for a snog in the dunes (Claire's usual holiday routine).
CHOICE GAMES:Dragonball Z, Space Invaders, Pacman

WORLD EXCLUSIVE! WORLD EXCL

MORTAL II

FIRST MEGA

- NEW GAME
- BY ACCLAIM
- MEGADRIVE

By now, we imagine you've had a good look through the Acclaim supplement attached to the front of this very issue and marvelled at the exclusive Mortal Kombat II shots printed there. Well, here for your delectation, are a few more.

Megadrive Mortal II currently weighs in at a staggering 48MEG, but developers, Probe, have yet to compress the data down to the 24MEG cart Acclaim have planned for. The version of the game seen in these very pages and those of the supplement are taken from the first ROMs Acclaim have seen of the conversion, and MEAN MACHINES SEGA were the first people outside of Acclaim to get a glimpse of this eagerly-awaited conversion. At the time of writing, Probe have completed the recreation of the twelve fighters, and were busy animating the backdrops. However, such is the complexity of the game so far, the version we saw used Sub-Zero, Reptile, and Scorpion — which are coloured variants of the same sprite! Nevertheless, we were impressed by what we saw.

Mortal Kombat II's sprites are considerably larger than those of the first game, and the extra 8MEG available is right where it should be — up on screen. All the arcade game's 'Babalities', 'Friendships' have been added, and Acclaim are also hoping to leave the gore intact. After the release of the bloodless Super NES original, they received a lot of flak regarding its ommission, so it seems likely the blood will remain but the game will be categorised an '18' by ELSPA's new ruling system. A welcome decision if it happens.

Mortal Kombat II is currently scheduled for release in September, but for the definitive guide to what must rank as the most eagerly-awaited game of the year see next month's MEAN MACHINES SEGA for the complete lowdown.



▲ *Mortal II's animation is twice as good as before.*



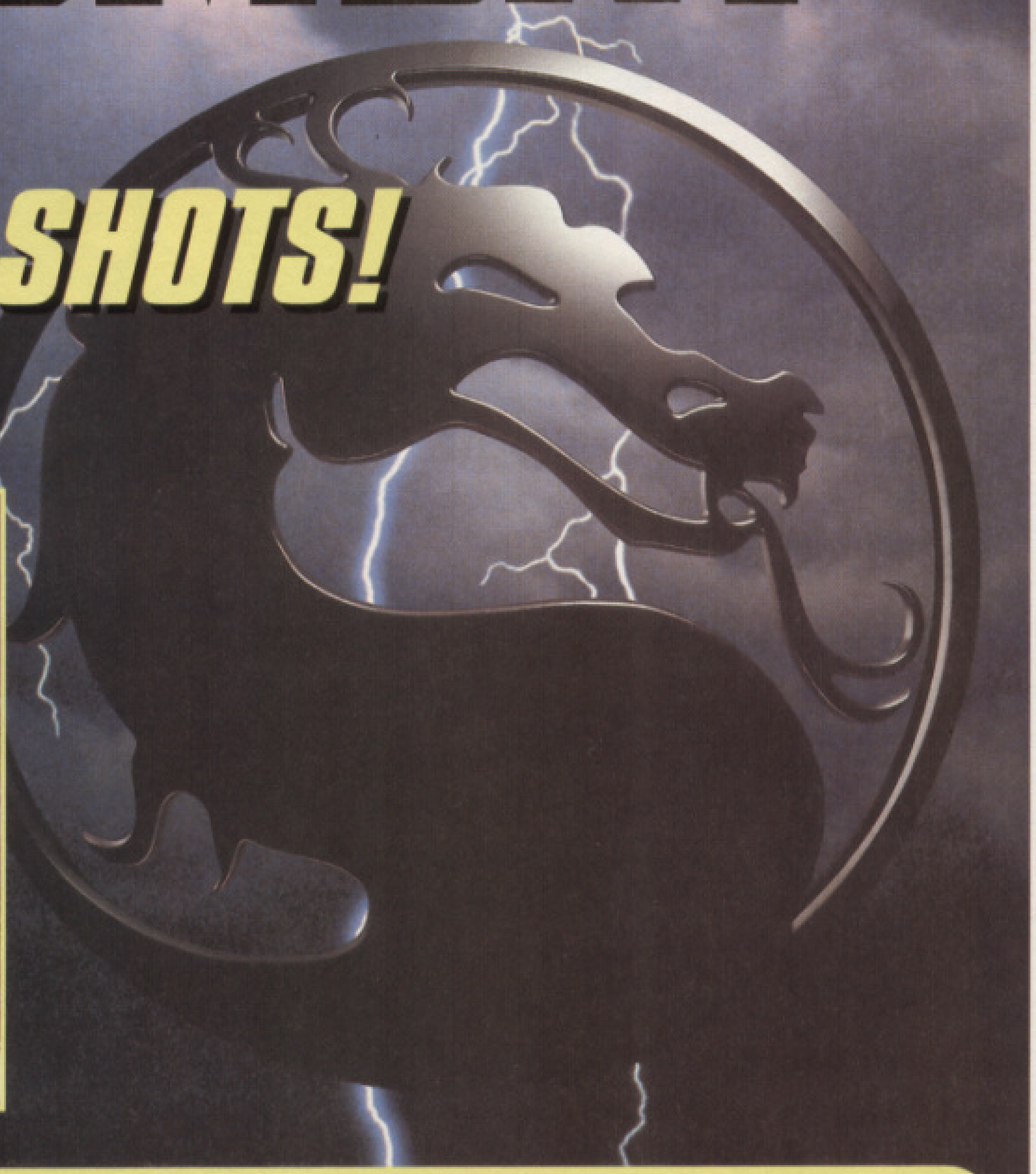


NEWS

...SIVE! WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

...KOMBAT

...DRIVE SHOTS!









YOU DON'T SAY...

Let's play Marvin Gaye and hear it through the grapevine...

It has been a bit of a quiet month on the chit-chat front, but what say we start with a duo of new film licences? Well, Acclaim are rather chuffed to announce that they're probably going to bring Arnie's sword-wielding romp, **Crusade**, to the Megadrive sometime in 1995, with the Geena Davis all-girl pirate escapade, **Madame Cutlass**, also due to the conversion process at the same time. And, hey, another dicky bird tells us that **Alien 4** — which is currently undergoing scripting in Hollywood — will be snapped up, too.

On the home front, Konami are busy searching for UK developers so they can put together a development centre over here, overseen by the teams responsible for Probotector and Rocket Knight in Japan. Over to Psygnosis now where the scouse developers have got a neat-looking Lemmings clone called **Benefactor**, and have finally confirmed that **Dropzone** is heading for the Megadrive. About time, too.

Let's talk hitches now. It seems like Core's **Chuck Rally** has got a flat, as gameplay problems are likely to delay it until August. And as for **Kick Off 3**! Imagineer's first Megadrive title isn't likely to appear until at least September due to all manner of problems at Enigma Variations, the team behind it. Original Kick Off graphic artist, Steve Screech, is now beavering away on the existing code, and it sems likely Imagineer will add a European tag to its title as they've missed the World Cup. Also, Master System owners looking forward to **Dropzone** should un-bait their breath. It may never happen.

Sorry if this all sounds very depressing, but let's end on a high note, shall we? The good news is Codemasters are indefinitely postponing further **Dizzy** games. See, life's not all bad...

SUPER STREET FIGHTER! FIRST MEGADRIVE SHOTS!

- NEW GAME
- BY CAPCOM
-





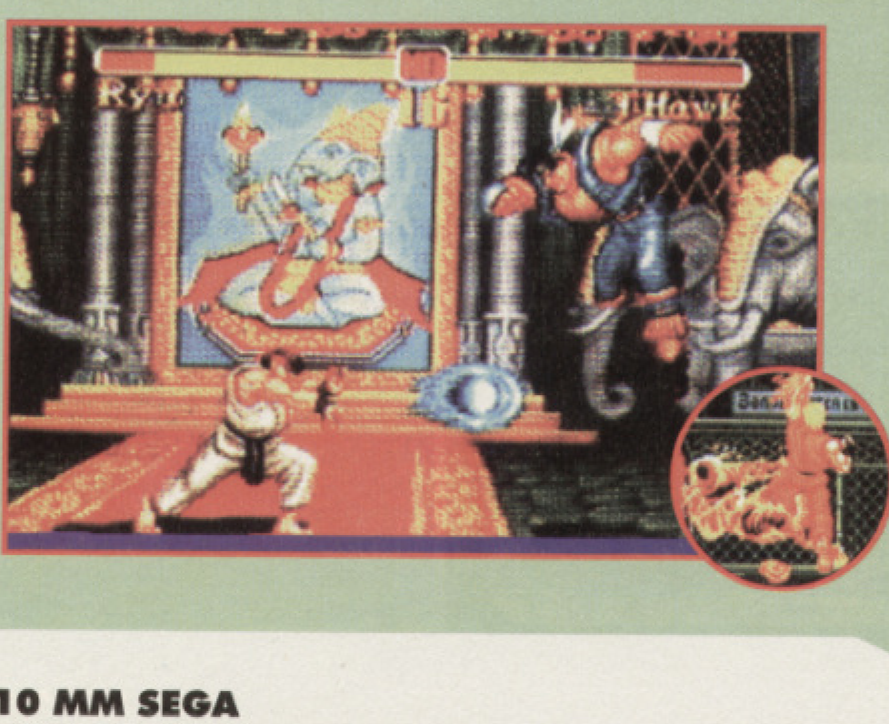




Cast your your eyes over these pics. Nope, your eyes do not deceive you, these are indeed the first Megadrive screen-shots of Capcom's forthcoming conversion of Super Street Fighter! Currently weighing in at a rather massive 40-MEG,early reports indicate that it's a very close translation of the mighty coin-op indeed.

Fei-Long, Cammy, T-Hawk, and Dee-Jay have survived the transition with all their special moves intact — although a few of Dhalsim's elephants seem to have disappeared! — and the 40-MEG used ensure that the game is as close to the coin-op as feasibly possible.

The one snag is that, because the game is so memory-intensive, Super Street Fighter could weigh in at a hefty £100! As such, there is no news about a UK release. As soon as there is, though, you'll be the first to know.



▲ *We really like these pictures of the Street Fighters. That's why we've printed them. Do you like them? We hope so.*

DEMON DINOSAURS

- NEW GAME
- BY CODEMASTERS
- MEGADRIVE

Dinosaurs feel the need for speed later this year with some seriously manic action in a brand new racing extravaganza on the Megadrive — courtesy of Codemasters.

Set in the prehistoric ages, Dino Racer is a 3D split screen, two-player challenge where ancient creatures of all descriptions race over eight fantasy islands — Glacial Island, Furnace Island, Jungle Island, Desert Island to name but a few. There are eight different characters to choose from but you can forget about groovy vehicles — the wheel hasn't been invented yet — you'll just have to make do with bare feet or climb aboard a mighty dinosaur to solve the posing problems facing you. Each dino has its own special abilities which can be topped up with the wide range of power-ups scattered around. Looking good but we'll bring you more news when we get it.



▼*Hey, this looks just like Chuck Rally. Without cars, mind.*



▲ *Stages in human evolvement no1: not standing under a dinosaur's bum.*

I'M A ROCKET MAN (TOO)

- NEW GAME
- BY KONAMI
- MEGADRIVE



One of the Megadrive's greatest platform heroes — Sparkster — makes a dramatic comeback in October of this year. Yep, Konami's sequel to Rocket Knight Adventures is currently 65% complete, we are proud to present a smattering of screens from it.

Set directly after events in Rocket Knight, the Devotnidos Army has returned and has provoked civil war in the land of Elhorn. And just to add to the mayhem, the leader of a satanic sub-division of the Devotnidos wants Sparkster's head on a a plate.

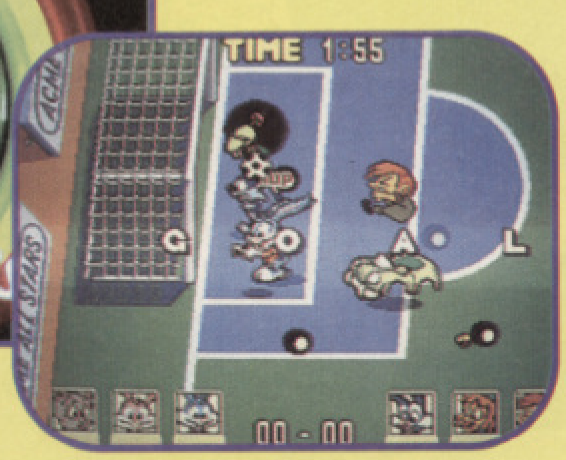
Thus, the only way Sparkster can save himself and Elhorn is to destroy the Devotnidos troops as he propels his way across the game's eight stages. We'll bring you an exclusive Work In Progress next issue. Stay tuned...







▼ *See Sparkster run. See Sparkster fly. See MEAN MACHINES SEGA scoop everyone to the preview...*



STAY TOONED

- NEW GAME
- BY KONAMI
- MEGADRIVE

We mentioned the return of Konami's Tiny Toon mates a few months back, but here are the first shots of their new sports sim: Acme All-Stars.

A one or two-player game, All-Stars offers both Basketball and Soccer action, as Buster and Co bring a series of special moves to each sport. As ever, Montana Max is in charge of the opposing side, but thankfully the Toons have a series of tricks up their sleeves. A release date has yet to be finalised, but it should hit your Megadrives sometime in October.

BATMAN FOREVER

- NEW GAME
- BY ACCLAIM
- MEGADRIVE

Acclaim's licence cupboard has taken delivery of another film, as Batman Forever is snapped up by the Knightsbridge-based guys and gals. Joel Schumacher has been signed to direct, but casting or plot details have yet to emerge from the Warner Bros Batcave.
Acclaim are planning both Megadrive and Mega-32 versions, although work has yet to start on either. Needless to see, if you see it anywhere first, it'll be within these hallowed pages.



FLASH AA-AAAH

- NEW GAME
- BY SONY
- MEGA CD

Sony have ripped the guts out of the hit Megadrive arcade adventure — Flashback — and reassembled it with alleged huge enhancements for a brand new Mega-CD experience.
The scenario's the same: eminent scientist, Conrad B Hart freaks out a little on discovering the Earth's rulers are extra-terrestrials. Rather than do the sensible thing and keep shtum about this and the fact that the world's molecular density has gone off the scale, he stupidly writes a thesis about it resulting in the aliens spiriting him away to a faraway planet, wiping his memory and leaving him to rot.
The aim's to return Conrad to Earth pronto achieved over five massive levels, by asking questions, collecting clues and gadgets, splattering hostile life forms, earning dosh. Whatever it takes, whether it's walking, running, fighting, skiing, ducking, diving or chatting, Conrad must get home and save the world. Check out the next issue of MEAN MACHINES for further details.

ECCO, ECCO ECCO

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- MEGADRIVE

Bursting onto the Megadrive in the very near future is the star of the smash hit underwater jaunt of '92 in a brand new Sega episode. It's Ecco the Dolphin and he's back bigger, better and wetter than ever.
Sega are keeping the exact details of the watery plot very much under wraps at the moment but no doubt it will star our fave dolphin swimming the depths of the ocean, using his radar system to deter foes, solving the mysteries of the deep, interacting with all and sundry while keeping himself going with pints of fresh air and highly nutritional fish and things. Sounds good and you can be sure we'll bring you the full low-down next issue.

WIN! WORLD CUP GOODIES WITH MARS!

- COMPO
- MARS

Yeah, we know England aren't in the World Cup this year, but you can always console yourselves by stuffing your face with chocolate. That's what Mars confectionery are offering, anyway.



To celebrate Mars' tie-in as the official World Cup chocolate supplier, they're offering ten 1966-style England football shirts, ten World Cup footballs, and 100 Snickers bars! Not bad, eh? All you have to do to win one of these rather neat prizes is answer the following multiple-choice question:

A Mars a day helps you...

A. Work, rest and play.
B. Keep the Doctor away.
C. Feel Ok.

Done that? Good, now write the answer on the back of a postcard and send it to:

CHOC-A-DOOBIE COMPETITION,
MEAN MACHINES SEGA,
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London,
EC1R 3AU

SECOND COMING

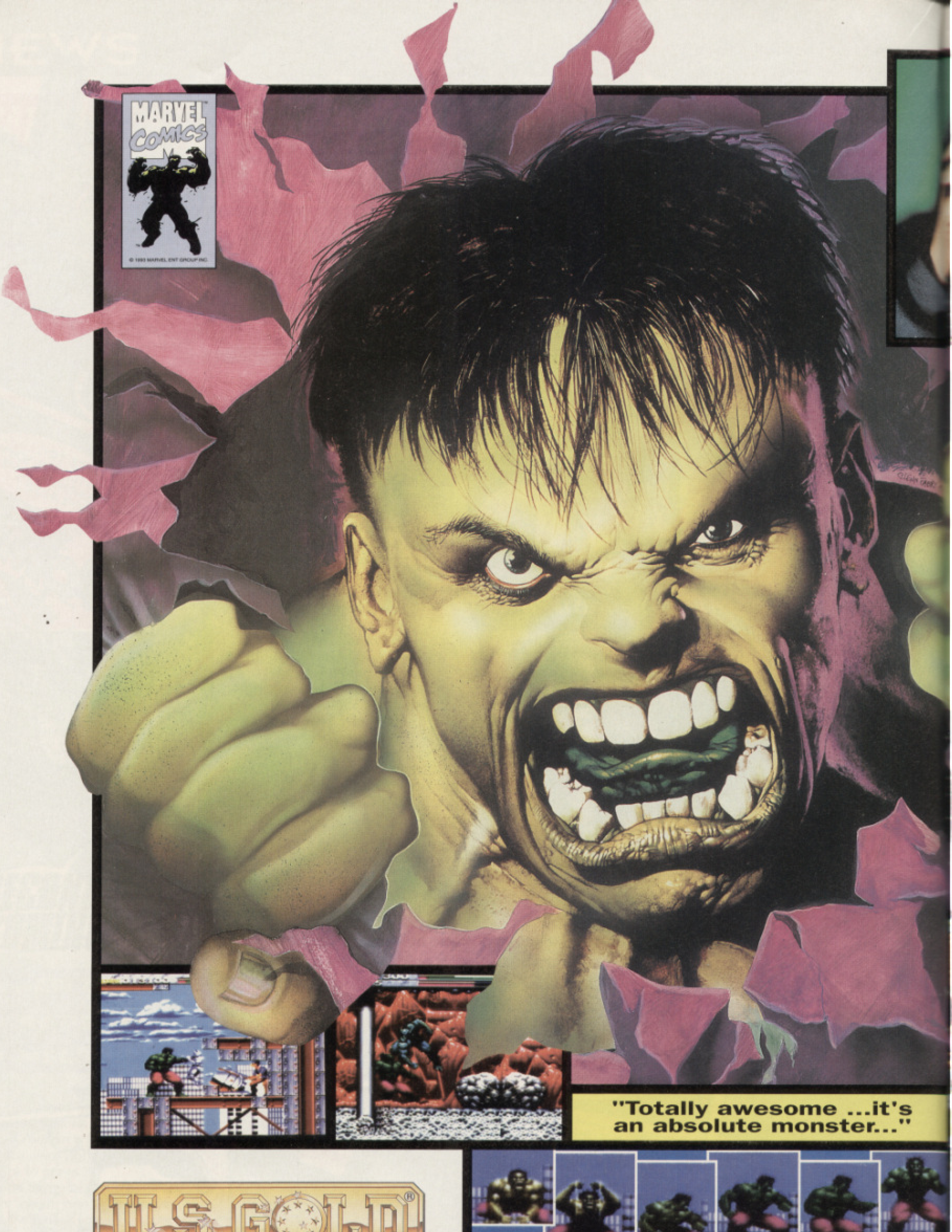
- NEW GAME
- BY PSYGNOSIS
- MEGADRIVE

We mentioned that Psygnosis were releasing Second Samurai in the gossip column a few months back, and we were right — and here's a picture to prove it.
Second Samurai is a crossbreed of slash 'em up and platform genres, with the player controlling the titular hero across a series of demon-ridden locations.
Vivid Image, the team behind the Amiga original, are converting the game, but it will be their last freelance title before they commit themselves to Gallic Soft co and new Sega licensee, UBI Soft. Details of the fruits of Vivid's new collaberation are scarce, but word has it that a driving game is on the drawing board.



are you ready...




MARVEL COMICS
"Totally awesome ...it's an absolute monster..."
U.S. GOLD







for a SCREEM test?

1. Insert cartridge

2. Nail down all valuables

3. Press start

Get into a **RAGE** and the bicep-bulging action begins as you get to grips with The Leader™ and your deadliest foes, including the thick-skinned Rhino™, Tyrannus™, Absorbing Man™, and Abomination™, The Incredible Hulk™, with 5 pumped up levels, eye popping 3-D graphics and pulverising special effects,

......it's **HULKING** great.



AVAILABLE ON - THE MEGA DRIVE, GAME GEAR, MASTER SYSTEM & NINTENDO® SUPER NES.

THE NEW BRE

It's beat 'em up time again, but this time using state-of the-art Silicon Graphics, 3D models, and a new technique called Motion Capture Technology which "captures" the movements of a real Martial Arts master. Oh, and no gore. Lucy Hickman checks it out.







Fiddling about with nature never did anyone any good — as seen in The New Breed. Things go horribly wrong when scientists stumble upon a recessive gene in the field of DNA which causes incredible strength and near invulnerability in its recipients.

Only one in a million individuals are capable of housing this gene so the powers that be select four parahumans as guinea pigs and form the Matrix Alpha — a genetically-enhanced crime fighting force who fight their way to justice.

But, as usual, the gene mutates and four potential Matrix candidates go astray, become bad guys, form a dangerous mercenary crime organisation called the Overlord and are generally cause a gigantic pain for the good guys.The Overlords are a deadly combination of genetic enhancements, black market cybernetics and lethal martial arts training so it's going to take all your fighting skills to put 'em in their place.

Choose from eight characters or play the Team Mode which is a no holds barred fight. Battle alone, against a mate or hone your talents in the training room. But what's going to set this game apart from the many other beat 'em ups doing the rounds? All the characters are drawn using 3D computer-generated models, using Motion Capture Technology technique in a game they claim produces animated characters with the most realistic movements ever.

The New Breed has a bigger fighting area than most, spanning several screens. In addition, the characters can pick up and use weapons. More news on this game when we get it — it's still early days, but check out the screens on this page for a first taste.

IRONCLAD

A gigantic mass of muscle and a black belt in Aikido. Ironclad's body parts are super-resilient and he's ultra-strong, and more than capable of lifting a tank above his head or performing a running leap over 50 metres. His party trick is to leap from a plane into the combat zone — without a parachute! — which shocks opponents into submission.



THE BAD GUYS

TRACER
Tracer formed the Overlord after his underling, Recoil, was promoted over his head. His speed is super-human — often appearing as a motion blur. Subdermal armour protects him from most attacks and sockets on his arms allow him to plug into a number of lethal weapons.



GROUND ZERO
Almost indestructible, this guy can walk through buildings, moves fast, and is a skilled boxer. His body courses with energy which is released as a fearsome blast in combat. A born sadist, he was thrown into prison after killing a boxer in the ring but was then snatched by Tracer and transformed into the killing machine he is today.



SHOCKWAVE
This guy was banished from the Matrix for over-using his powers. Somewhat miffed, he joined the Overlord where he wouldn't have to hold back. He can manipulate electrical fields for either attack or defence as long as he can find conductive material to channel them. His special trick is the ability to teleport.



BANZAI
This girl's one of the 'one in a million' who already possessed the recessive gene which she activated herself. She's one of the best martial artists in the world and carries a number of weapons, her favourite being her katana blade which has been known to cut through steel beams.



THE GOOD GUYS

RECOIL
The leader of the Matrix, Recoil's got the strength of an Olympic weight lifter, the dexterity of a gymnast, and amazing co-ordination. His almost telepathic combat sense combined with his self-healing powers, which heal wounds in minutes, makes him a formidable leader.



PITBULL
A natural born warrior even before he was given the Matrix treatment, Pitbull's speed and balance is unsurpassed. His martial arts training is as finely tuned as it gets. He, too, has the incredible ability to heal himself — even gunshot wounds.



HOTSHOT
An Olympic level fighter and ace marksman, Hotshot also projects raw beams of energy from her body which can punch holes in toughened steel. Her control of these powers is limited, though, so she needs devices which help her channel them. She has limited powers of flight but her combat imaging helmet projects a



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DEVELOPERS
ACCOLADE US

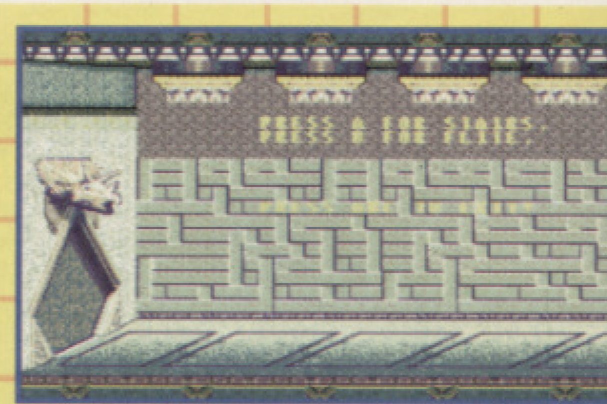
CART SIZE
16MEG OR 24MEG

INITIATED
JANUARY '93

RELEASE
OCTOBER '94

PLAYERS
1-2





▲ *One of the contrasting sub sections.*

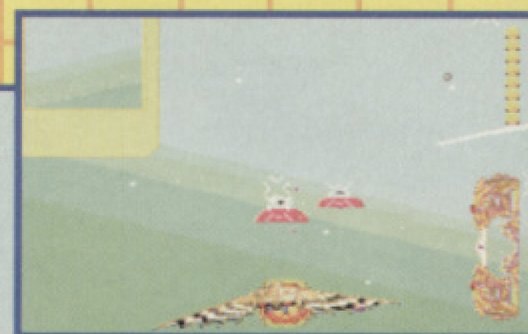
Video game legend says there are but seven game genres. Thus, playing it safe, Accolade bundled as many together as possible

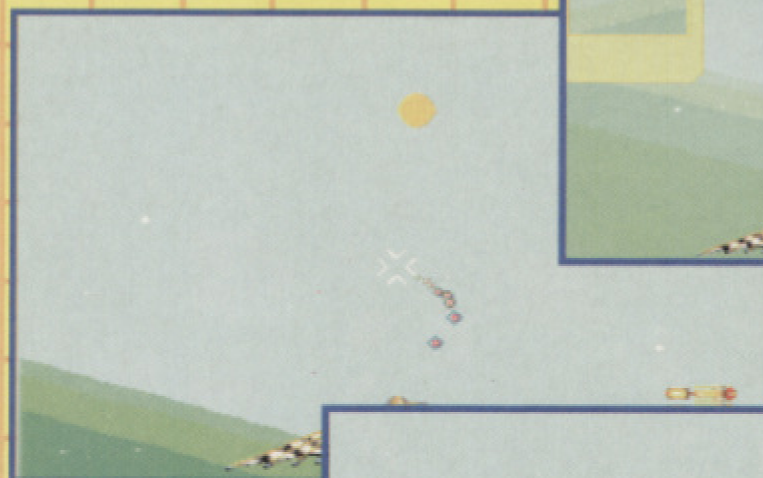
It's hard to describe what makes a good Megadrive game. Some games look pretty average, but have an elusive quality which keeps you coming back. If it's a truly excellent game, you'll still give it a bash even after you've finished it. The most attractive games are those with loads of gameplay variety so you never become bogged down with the same old thing.

For the success of their latest project, Accolade are banking on the games-playing public feeling the same way because, in Fire Team Rogue, they've taken the most popular games genres — platform, RPG, flight sims, puzzle, beat 'em up and shoot 'em up — and packed them all into one 16MEG cart.

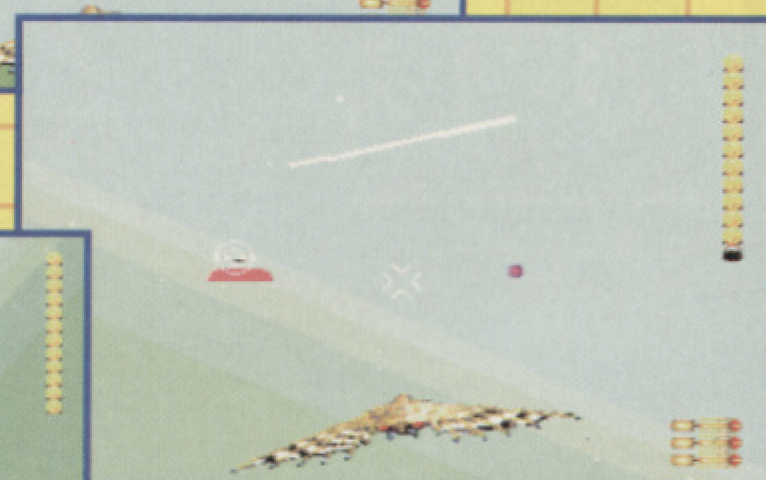
Using a fantasy/sci-fi theme, Fire Team Rogue recounts the story of Ammon Düm (Earth) being caught up in a power struggle between the two great powers of the universe: the Spiral Arm and the evil forces of Umbra. The balance of power hangs with the Dark Talis — a weapon of incomparable power.

Starting off as one of the heroic FireTeam Rogue team — Chance, Aja, ShadowBlade and Broc — must escape your bonds and, strive for the possession of The Dark Talis.





▲ *The warmth of a distant sun*





▲ *Wings of splendour in Fireteam Rogue.*

FORMAT
MEGADRIVE

PUBLISHER
ACCOLADE

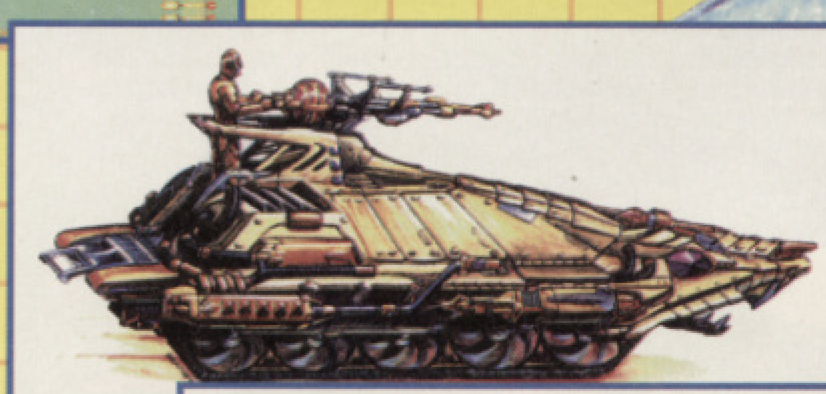
DEVELOPERS
ACCOLADE US

CART SIZE
16 OR 24 MEG

INITIATED
JAN'93

RELEASE
NOVEMBER '94

PLAYERS
1-2





▲ *Detailed sketches of the game's Jules Verne-like hardware.*

CHANCE

FULL NAME: Chance Torakazi
RACE: Humanoid
STRENGTHS:A Martial Arts expert and keen philosopher, his mental powers are formidable. It was he who chanced upon the Dark Talis and so formed the FireTeam Rogue.

SHADOWBLADE

FULL NAME: ShadowBlade of the Thunder Rain.
RACE: Saikaran, originally from Saijoor.
STRENGTHS: Born a Prince of the Thunder Rain tribe, ShadowBlade, like most cats, can see in the dark. He's a natural hunter and fights with silent weapons, though he's most comfortable with his twin Tycu swords. A trained Saikaran warrior, he is also an expert in Martial Arts and moves with a dancer's grace.

BROC

FULL NAME: Nim Koumal Brombiza Broc
RACE: Bakouma
STRENGTHS: Broc is the thinker of the team. Logic rules his actions but his massive strength is such that if logic calls for knocking down a wall with his bare hands, so be it. He prefers shooting weapons — the bigger the better. This guy is on a personal crusade to avenge the slaughter of his ancestors and to stop the Umbra from spreading.

AJA

FULL NAME: Aja Doe
RACE: Elwynn (Elf)
STRENGTHS:A highly competent fighter, Aja, withe her high;y tuned senses acts as the group's radar — spotting disturbances and detecting new life forms. She's also a dab hand on the engineering front — effortlessly diagnosing any problems the ship may have. Aja turned to the Team when her father was killed by the Umbra as he tried to guard the Dark Talis.

ZEUT

FULL NAME: Unknown.
RACE: Talis life form.
STRENGTHS: Zeut is Chance's lieutenant. He communicates through sounds, body language, and by changing the shape of his visor eyepiece. He has two main forms but can morph into others. The first is oval shaped which hovers a few feet off the ground. The second is a full suit of armour with a weapon morphing ability.



▲ *Ground targets lined up for destruction.*

WORK IN PROGRESS

URB

First there was Desert Strike — a game with helicopters in it. Then there was Jungle Strike — a game with helicopters in it. Now there's Urban Strike — a game with helicopters in it. Lucy Hickman flew down to EA HQ to rendezvous with the American top brass via a video-link.



Desert Strike caused a storm when released on the Megadriving public in 1992 — selling phenomenally well, no doubt due to it's addictive, 3D shoot 'em up style gameplay (although cashing in on post Gulf war jingoism undoubtedly helped). Then last year came Jungle Strike — a truly ace sequel with bigger, better, more difficult missions and a vast choice of vehicles. The question is, will Urban Strike be a good game in its own right or has EA sequelitis struck again with more of the same being trotted out?

Game Director, John Manley argues that there's a lot of life in the Strike series yet: "A lot of what makes the Strike series work is the storyline and there is always a new story for an action game. When we are making a game, particularly a sequel, we'll keep what was great in the original game and build upon that. We try not to make just an upgrade, but to make a game that's great in its own right so that it doesn't destroy the first one and so people will go back and play the previous games and still have a great experience." More on the game's unique features in a moment. But first the scenario...

The year is 2006, the countries of the world are finally at peace with the New World Order protected by the United Nations Special Task Force. But media mogul and multi-millionaire, John Smythe, is tired of all this girly peace and fancies a bit of aggro. So, after stock-piling a mass of cutting edge weaponry, he sets about taking over the world — starting with the destruction of the USA.

Over 13 levels, which are 50 percent bigger and a good deal harder than those of Jungle Strike, you must stop him in your new high-tech air/ land/ sea crafts, starting off in the Phoenix Thunderhawk Attack Chopper



▼ *This chopper isn't bringing cigarettes and Mars bars. It's trouble.*

PROJECT
URBAN STRIKE

PUBLISHER
EA

INITIATED
NOVEMBER '93

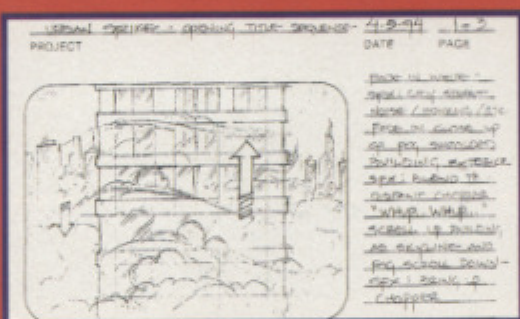
RELEASE
OCTOBER '94

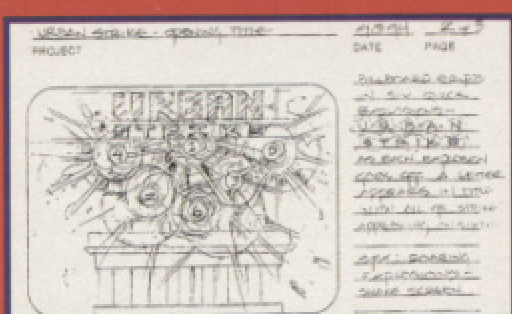
FORMAT
MEGADRIVE

DEVELOPERS
EA (U.S)



AN STRIKE







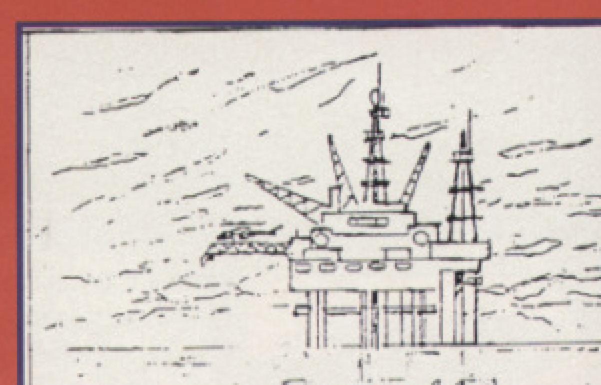


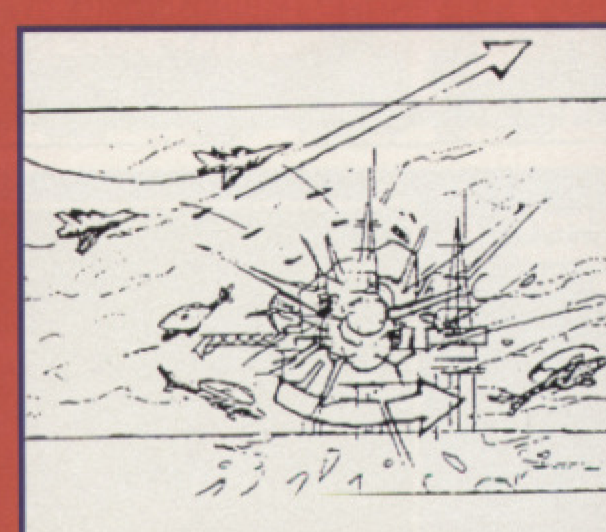




VERITABLE VEHICLES

Since Urban Strike is set in the future, the developers have come up with ficticious hi-tech crafts based on what they believe the future will hold. There's the Phoenix Thunderhawk Attack Chopper which is loaded with the best in 21st Century weaponry; the 20-seat Osprey III Transport Chopper which is heavily-armoured but carries less weapons which is ideal for rescue missions; and there's good old-fashioned feet. The latter adds an entirely new aspect to the Strike series which involves hopping from your 'chopper. During the Alcatraz mission, for instance, your aim is to rescue a downed pilot, and to shoot holy hell out of any enemy in sight, of course in true arcade fashion. If your feet get a bit weary, though, you can always climb aboard one of the enemy's abandoned Ground Assault Vehicles which are equipped with a gun and a side-mounted rocket launcher.





MISSION POSSIBLE

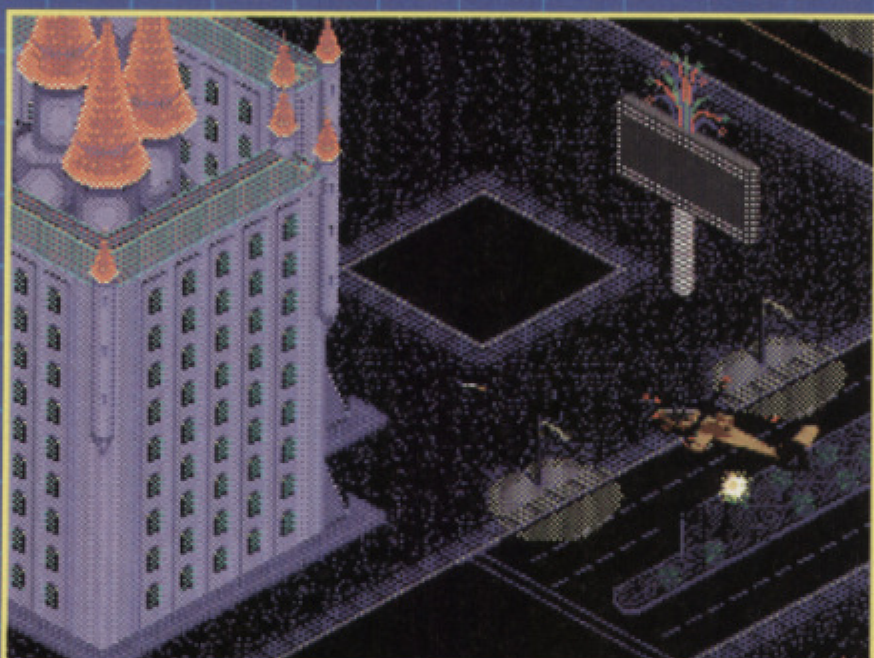
Your Yank-saving quest takes you all over the States where weather and light changes all seek to thwart your progress. There's San Francisco's fog-shrouded bay area, a flight over the skyscrapers of New York where airborne enemies give you a hard time; an offshore oil rig to explore; Alcatraz prison; and a night time escapade in Las Vegas to name but a few. Since the UN Special Forces team is now international, some of the people you fought in previous games, such as the Iraqis are now on your side in the international cast of co-pilots, all of whom have different capabilities and strengths.

STRIKING FEATURES

As well as the new levels, weapons and vehicles, Urban Strike includes a wealth of new features including smaller objectives during the course of a level such as defusing bombs by cutting the correct wires via an interactive control panel. You must also collect and drop objects in the right locations before progress can be made. Said John: "In the level where Air-Force 1 has crashed on the suburban area, you may have to go into the wreckage of a highway, remove the wreckage, carry the car on your hook and take it to the emergency services. You may also have to pick up a water tank and drop it on a burning house. There will also be more air-to-air combat — there can't be many tanks moving around the roofs so you have to stop the planes screaming by. "Other new features include better power-ups and smart bombs which destroy everything on the screen, time limits on some sections, and new audio-visual movie stunt effects such as car explosions and flame outs."

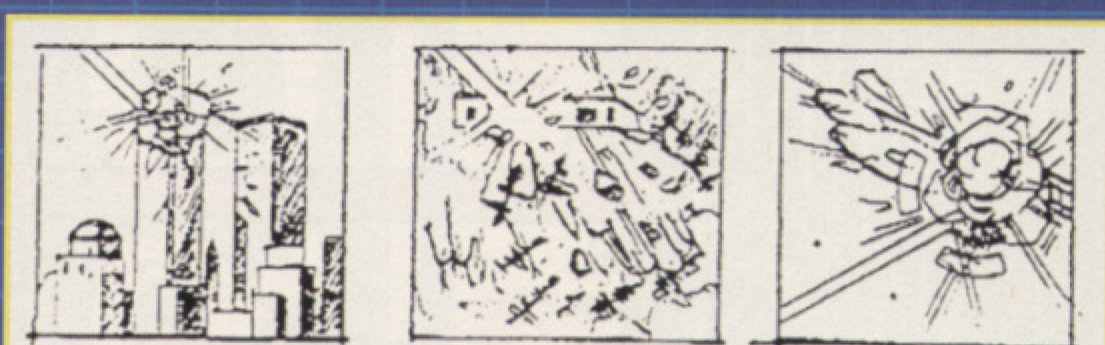


▲ The 'Strike series moves into the next century.





▲ Raid over San Francisco. Bomb Karl Malden.



This level's for Sphinxer boys. ▶





▲ From dawn to dusk and beyond.

WIN! WIN! WIN!

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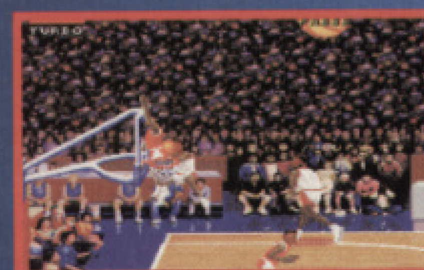
And what have you got to do to grab this veritable Aladdin's cave of goodies? Simply race down to your local Argos Superstore, tear through one of their catalogues packed full of possible prizes and pick out the catalogue number for a SEGA Gamegear (with Columns). Put it on the entry coupon and post it to us here at Emap!

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Acclaim

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ANSWER 1..

QUESTION 2 : WHAT DOES NBA STAND FOR?

ANSWER 2..

NAME..

ADDRESS..

....

TELEPHONE NO..............................AGE..............................

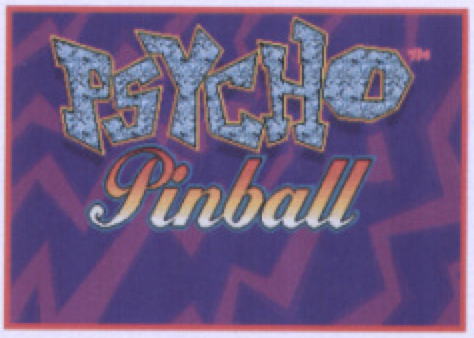
HOW TO ENTER

Put the answer to the two questions on the voucher on the left.

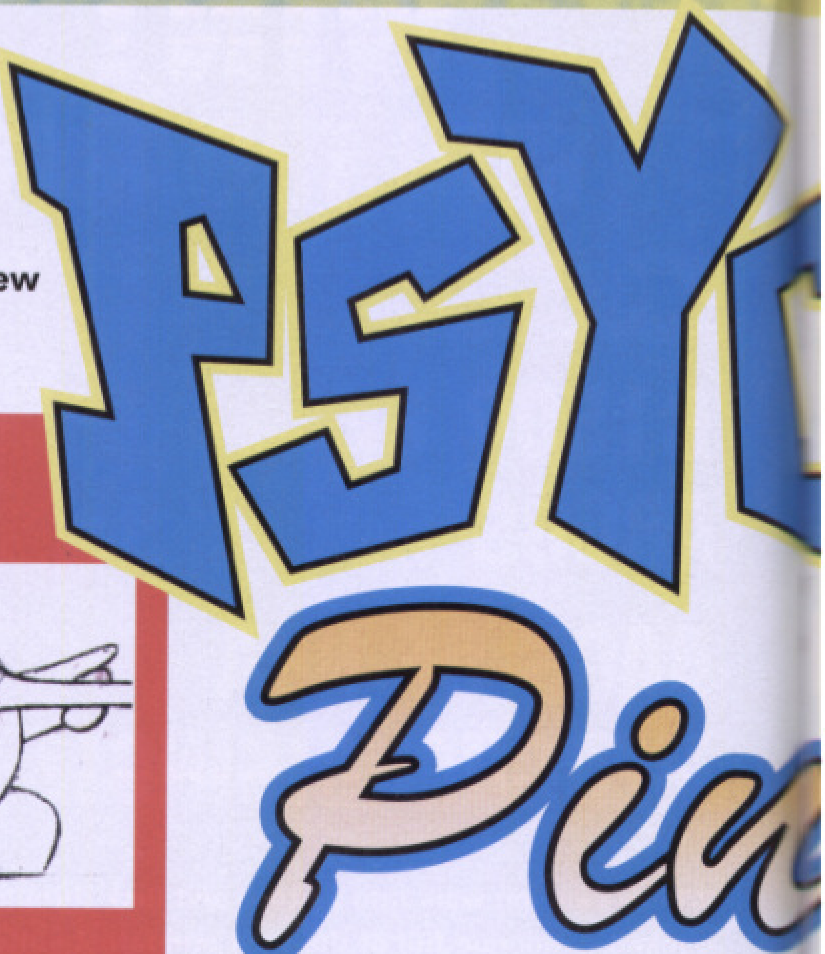
Post it to us at:

NBA Comp.,
Emap Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane,London. EC1R 3AU.

- Entries must be in by 15th June.
- Winners will be notified by post.
- No correspondence will be entered into.
- Employees,friends,family, dogs, window cleaners and other relations of Emap, Argos or Acclaim are not allowed to enter



As The Who once said that deaf, dumb and blind kid sure plays a mean pinball. Unfortunately, Steve wasn't free so Lucy Hickman rolled down to Codemasters to get in on their new pinball experience.



The pinball releases of late, it has to be said, have been pretty sub-standard — Sonic Spinball, Virtual Pinball and Dragon's Revenge (the sequel to the cracking Dragon's Fury) all got a lukewarm response and deservedly so. Codemasters are now trying to break the mediocrity mould with 16-MEGs worth of Psycho Pinball which, if first impressions are anything to go by, looks like it could be a winner.

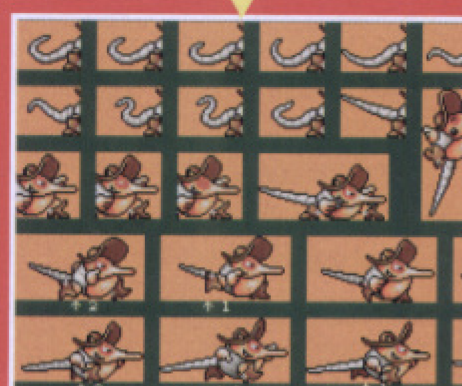
For starters, there's a lot packed into this game with one main table which leads off onto themed sub-tables which lead onto bonus games or one of several mini-panel games — all with different playing styles — so it's going to take a long time to wade through it all (provided the difficulty setting is at the right level, of course, and all indications are that it will be).

As is the Codemasters style, Psycho Pinball is very bright and cartoony with the most bizarre "ball" ever. As the graphic designer, Paul Adams said, Psycho looks like a mixture between an aardvark, a panda and a cat but he's quite versatile and changes his costume for each of the themed tables (the ball that is, not Paul Adams).

Codies boast that this is the most realistic pinball game ever with a ball which really does go where you flick it, instead of following one of a few set routes. Mind you, it should be good — programmer Andy Graham (the creator of the original Micro Machines) has spent more than two years alone on getting the ball movement spot on!

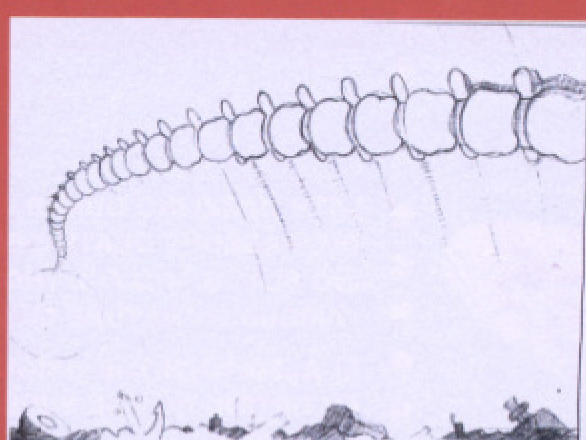
▼ *From rough sketch to finished sprite — Psycho in his Wild West gear.*







FORMAT	MEGADRIVE
PUBLISHER	CODEMASTERS
DEVELOPER	CODEMASTERS
CART SIZE	16-MEG
INITIATED	JANUARY '92
RELEASE	NOVEMBER '94
PLAYERS	1-2

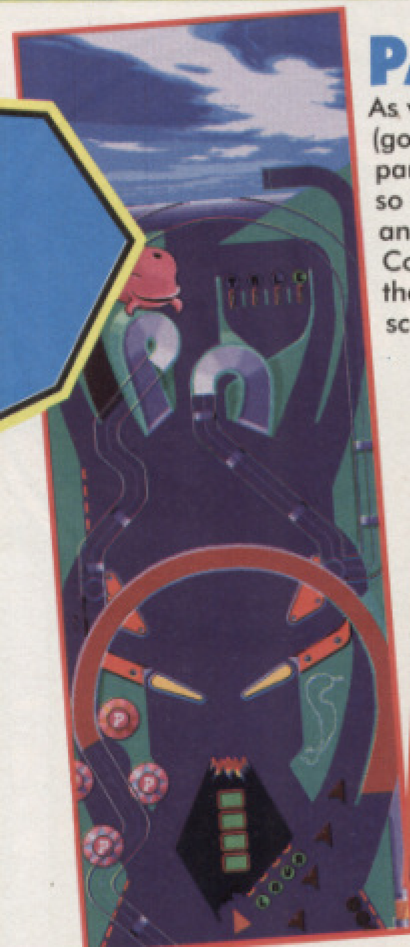




SUB-STANTIAL SUB-GAMES

The main pinball table has a fairground theme with more than a hundred different bonuses and features, and, when enough points have been scored, players can shoot off, via a fairgound tent, to other themed tables. These include Casino Cowboy which is set in the Wild West and has Psycho as an outlaw who has to break the bank in order to reach the runaway train sub-game. This has our boy running along, avoiding baddies, collecting bonuses until he reaches the front of the train and stops it. There's a space table leading to a Moon Squares sub-game where Psycho has to move across the dissolving squares to reach the other spaceship. The Ghost table leads to Terror Towers — a Gauntlet-esque sub-game where speedy retrieval of bonuses and keys and a quick dash to the exit is the name of the game. The underwater table leads to a whale's belly where Colin the Crab, Codemasters' unsung cameo hero also makes an appearance (he turned up in most of the Dizzy games) — you chuck him at a whale's ulcers to burst them and raise the water level — rather gross really!

CHO ball

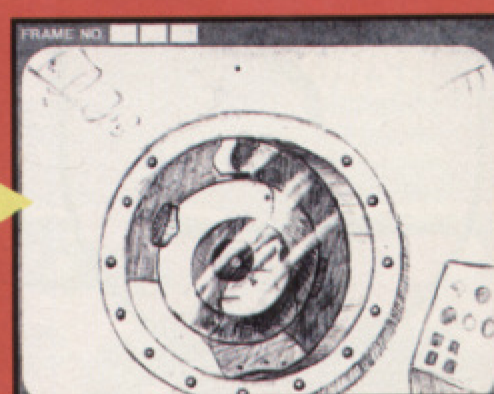


PANEL POWER

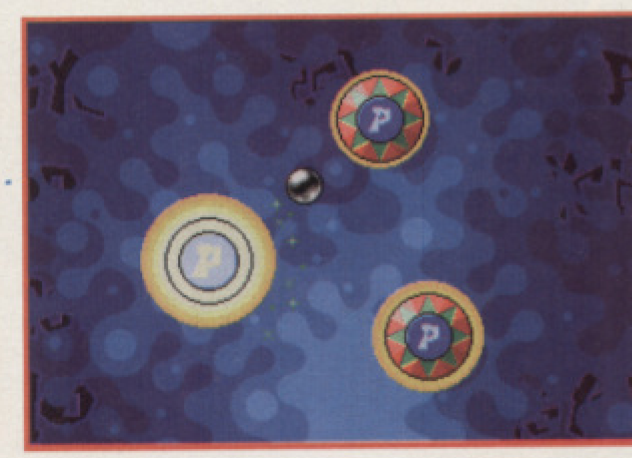
As well as the bonus games leading off from the sub-tables (god, this is getting confusing) there are also a number of panel games up for grabs — at least three for each sub-table so far. These include games like Blackjack, Shoot the Cowboy, and even a mini-Space Invaders to name just three. Completion of these, of course, leads to points galore and there are certainly enough points to be had. The biggest hi-score is going to be 99 BILLION!







▲ *Take Psycho to the other spaceship in the Moon Squares sub-game.*









▲ *The original sketch of the main funfair table.*



Blackjack is played here. Another mini-game is shooting cow-boys which pop up around the table.

Blow up the jail to release your mates and head into multi ball.

Light the cards to reach the Blackjack mini-game.

Break the bank to steal your own jackpot reward.

Light the rodeo letters, then the engine letters which releases a train to take Psycho to the sub-game.

Light all the letters of the Reward poster to bump up your jackpot.

The Original Micro Machines Scale Miniatures 2

Last month we brought you the EXCLUSIVE first look at this potentially-stunning racing sequel from Codemasters. Muchos work has gone on since then so once again Lucy Hickman zoomed down to Codies' HQ to see what was going down.



The story so far... The original Micro Machines, with it's cartoony graphics and zany mini-racing gameplay caused a storm in the Megadrive world last year. Capitalising on its success, Codies are now working flat out on the sequel — provisionally called Micro Machines 2 — which they plan to make bigger, with twice as many tracks, vehicles and players. Souping up the graphics, sound and basic gameplay are also on the agenda.

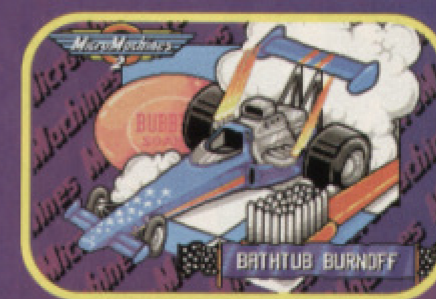
One of the more ambitious ideas that Micro 2's producer and main programmer, Pete Williamson is working on is to have EIGHT players competing at the same time. It sounds impossible, but if you cast your minds back to the first Game Gear version, simultaneous two-player action was made possible by one player using the A + B buttons to steer and accelerate and the other using the D-Pad. He's going to try the same thing on the Megadrive. Pete freely admits the idea might not work (particularly for people like me who suffer from chronic flightitus— the tendency to "steer" the joypad — when playing a racing game) but he's going to give it a damn good try

Another extra touch Pete has included is far more interaction with the backgrounds. Every level will have at least one of these unique features such as high winds blowing you in the Treehouse level, a corn on the cob bridge spinning at high speed in the Dining Room and a cooker which fries you in the kitchen.

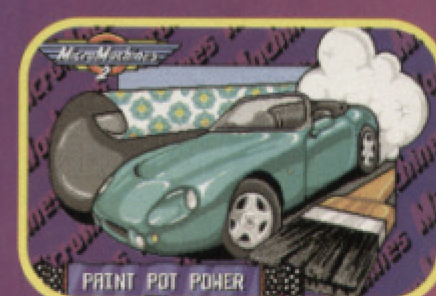
There are many ways to play Micro Machines 2 — various combinations of player numbers, alone or in teams, Challenge games, a League for one player, Time Trials and even a Mini Micro Machines which makes the vehicles even smaller. More advanced players will be relieved to hear that if they achieve a record score they're allowed to bypass the easier levels should they snuff it.

FORMAT
MEGADRIVE
PUBLISHER
CODEMASTERS
DEVELOPERS
SUPER SONIC SOFTWARE
CART SIZE
12-MEG
INITIATED
NOVEMBER '93
RELEASE
NOVEMBER '94
PLAYERS
1-4

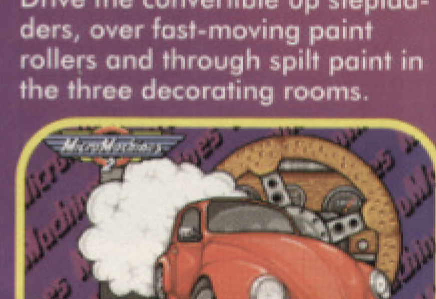
DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS.



BATHROOM
Over toilet seats, baths and sinks for three levels of dragster fun.



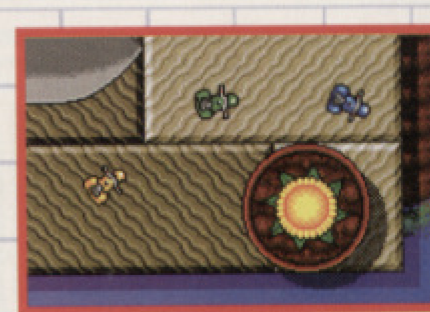
DECORATING ROOM
Drive the convertible up stepladders, over fast-moving paint rollers and through spilt paint in the three decorating rooms.

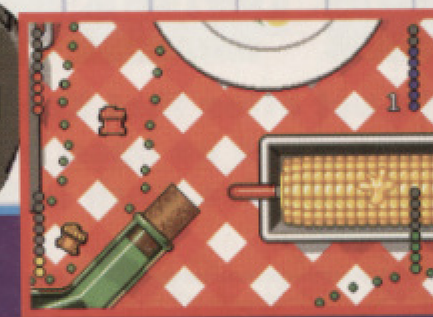


IN A CAR
For three levels you drive a VW Beetle through another full size car, around pedals, past gearsticks and over the dashboard. Later on you jump in a helicopter for more of the same.









There are more than twice as many tracks and vehicles in this sequel. Some of the 54 tracks will be repeated but each will become progressively more difficult and feature a unique interactive feature. Here's a run down of the tracks on offer, the vehicles to be used on each and the special feature involved:



SWIMMING POOL

Two levels of boats. 'Nuff said.



POOL TABLE

Big balls galore to avoid over four levels of Le Mans controlling.



MUSIC ROOM

Monster truck fun over three levels of caterwauling.



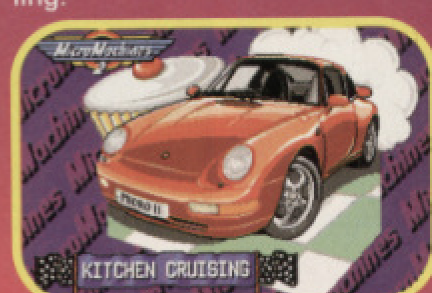
ATTIC AND CELLAR

Jeeps and kopters ahoy for levels of high flying and low level racing.



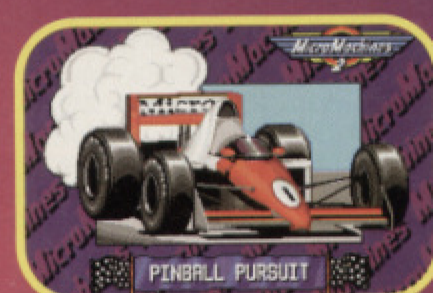
DINING TABLE

The dumper truck is used for three levels then one in a 'copter where you find a jelly jump, wine spill and a rotating Corn on the Cob.



KITCHEN

Treacherous plates in the sink, a hotplate that frazzles your Porsche and more irrepressible jellies daunt you on these three levels.



PINBALL TABLE

Protect your Indy Car from the balls 'n' bumpers in these two.



WORKSHOP

Manic buzzsaws and killer screwdrivers are just some of the hazards your jeep encounters in the three workshop levels.



BEACH

Funnily enough, beach buggies are the vehicles used during these four levels of sandcastles, sea, buckets and spades.



BEDROOM

Four levels of stockcar racing with a possible nice twist of human feet sticking out the end of the bed.



GARDEN

The garden's a bit of a triathlon event where you start in ATVs for rough and tumble in the grass and flowers then it's into a hovercraft and onto the pond for some fraternisation with frogs.

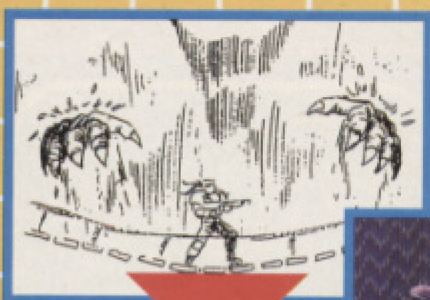


TREEHOUSE

Tear around the four treehouse levels in a four-wheel drive. Unstable tree knots, wonky roof gutters, high winds and searing rainfalls are the specials on offer.

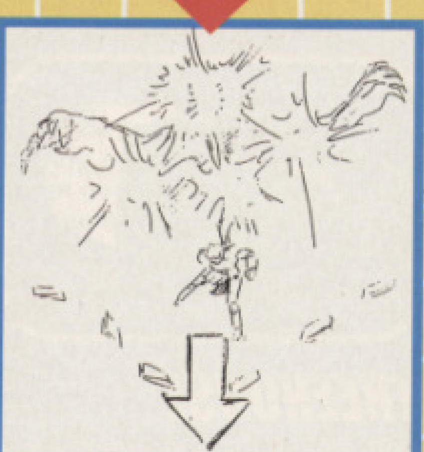
PROBOTECTOR

It's not often that Konami's development team open their doors, but MEAN MACHINES SEGA were given an open invite, and Probotector was the first thing we saw. In the last part of our exclusive Work In Progress, we get right behind the scenes of this eagerly-awaited conversion...









▲Each boss started life as a series of sketches. Games imitate art, and vice versa (that's Post-Modernism, folks!).



The story so far: Meantime we have learned that Colonel Bahamut, hero of the Super NES battle against the alien invaders, has amassed an army of cybernetic allies following his failed attempt to seize control of the surviving humans. The Earth government have created a special 'Contra' team to infiltrate Bahamut's lair and kill him. This team is made up of two humans, a wolverine mutant, and a small special-weapons droid called Brownie.

We also discovered that Konami's Japanese development team were aiming to expand upon the original Nintendo game by adding a plot where the player can choose their route through the game's scrolling levels, and a wider variety of weaponry which differed from character to the character. This month, however, we bring exclusive information on the game's bosses and talk to the programmers about the ideas they hope to include in the completed game.



▲This boss is here for the duration, with a dozen attacks.



GONNA BOSS-T YOUR ASS

The programmers are keen to ensure Probotector's bosses are as varied as possible. Whereas most boss creatures appear at the end of a stage and require a number of hits before they give up the ghost, Probotector's span several screens and provide a running theme throughout a level. For example, during one of the stages, an oval robot appears using a claw to pull itself towards the player. Shooting it seems to have no effect, but it continues its pursuit across several winding corridors — sprouting gyrocopter blades in the process — until a second claw emerges and fastens itself to the ceiling. Only now is it remotely vulnerable, but when shot the device's 'arms' extend to take it out of harm's way, so only short bursts of fire have any effect. Another rather neat idea is what is currently entitled 'Zodiac.' At the end of this stage, Bahamut drags the player into a computer-generated world before dissolving into stars. These then reform into astrological signs such as Taurus the bull, Sagittarius the Archer and the Gemini twins which then attack the player!



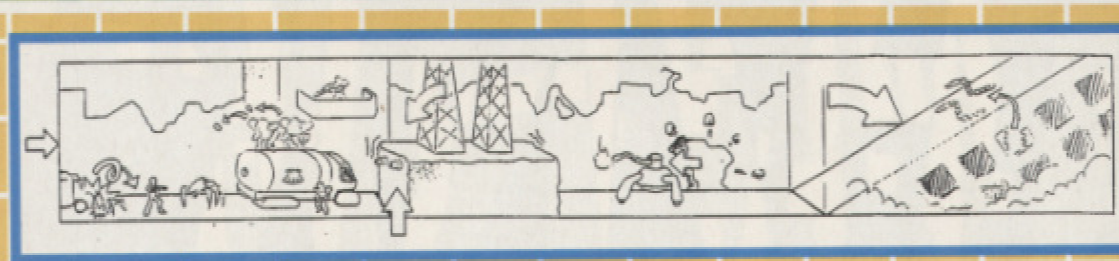
▲ Horoscope for Taurus — it's cowpat in your scants time.

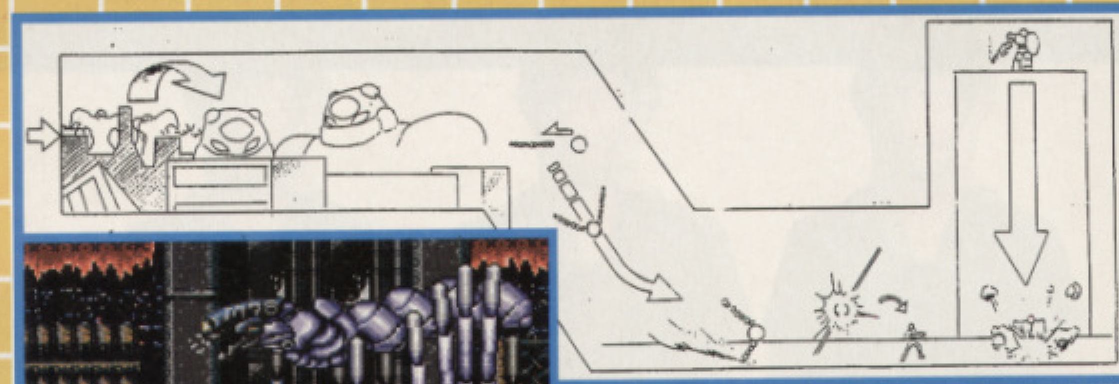


▲ Gemini — double trouble, double fun — on Megadrive!

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

When it comes to describing what goes into a Konami game, the programmers are extremely tight-lipped. They refuse to go into fine detail regarding the game's development systems, and reveal who does what during the production of the game. When it comes to detailing inspiration for the game's levels, though, they're full of enthusiasm. Initially, the team meets to toss a number of ideas together. The basic scrolling/blasting action had to be left intact for the game to continue the existing Probotector series, but from here they had pretty much carte blanche to do what they wanted. All the best ideas thrown up from the meetings are then road-tested for feasibility, but the team confess that a mere 10% survive to the final game. During this time, the team are given individual responsibilities which they split up and carry out — including reference visits to museums, libraries and the like. They then pool the finished code together and smooth off any rough edges.







▲ More leg than a coachload of supermodels.



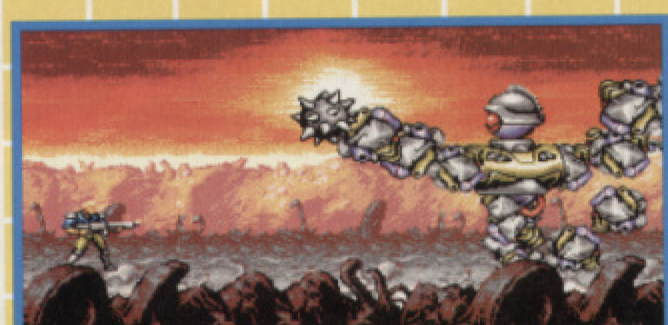


▲ The proverbial blue-bottomed insect in action.

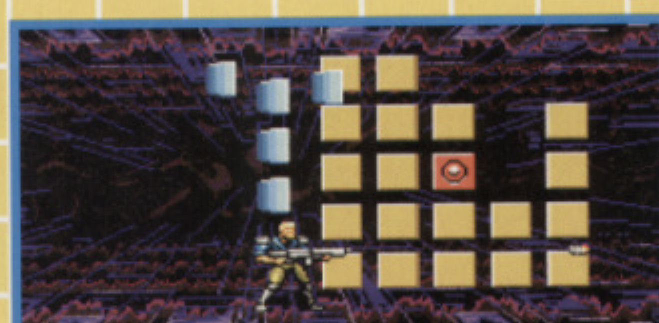


▲ If I can just make it back...no you may not.





▲ This boss has large arms and is psychopathic. Bad combo.



▲ This is one sequence in the boss' amazing transformation.



▲ Even the smokeless ashtrays are alive with evil.



▲ Vorsprung Durch Technik — which means "oh, flip!".

PROJECT
PROBOTECTOR

PUBLISHER
KONAMI

INITIATED
JUNE 93

RELEASE
DECEMBER '94

FORMAT
MEGADRIVE

DEVELOPERS
IN HOUSE

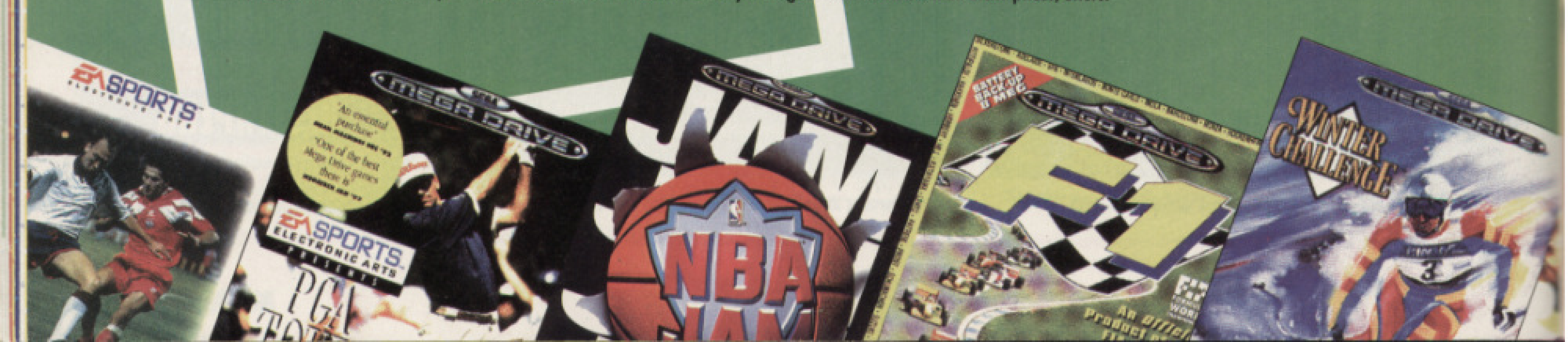
THINK YOU CAN



Cole, Cantona Papin? So you know your goal scorers. Matthaus, Guillit, Platt, and your midfield maestro's.
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AT Dixons



Mean Machines readers often ask me if I do anything except edit this mungy letters page. Well, last week I was meant to stand in as presenter of the Little Picture Show, that crappy video review programme hosted by Helen-Kella Thrushed-Up. Anyway she'd had an accident with a Phillips' Ladyshave and had to take a couple of days off work. So I was doing my fave vids of all-time. And first up is 'Pink Flamingos' by John Waters, which is really cool, and I'm telling them about the bit where's there's this big dog turd on the pavement, and this fat maddy called Divine gets down on all fours and... Anyway, it's the first video REVIEW programme with an 18 certificate. Send your dross to the same old address: I AM AN ANARCHIST, I AM THE ANTI-FREEZE MAILBAG, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU.

MEAN YOB

EGGY

Dear Yob,
I am an extremely worried Mother, I believe you are poisoning the minds of young innocent children, with your foul-mouthed attitude and abusive temperament. Are you obsessed with throwing insults at people? Is it the only pleasure you have in life? People have to resort to writing garbage to you because it seems it's the only type of language you understand. Why don't you try being kind for once? You might gain some respect.

I realise you will probably proceed to call people new devilishly funny names, which should please all the half wits who think you're funny. But I assure you there are many who think your poor attempts at humour are in very bad taste.

In your magazine you accuse games of being unoriginal and put them down for this. I believe that you are the most predictable person with the least originality and talent I've ever came across. Every week you churn out repeats of last month's unamusing insults, why don't you do something new for once in your life? You must have a fair amount of intelligence to be allowed to write articles in this magazine, why don't you try and use it? Just try and be a little more creative than John Major for once in your boring life.

Mrs. H Kynaston, Camorthen

YOB: Thanks, 'Worried Mother'. I'm perfectly happy to take advice on being 'original' and adventurous from your good self. I'm sure you even pick the trolley with the dodgy wheel at Tesco's, for that extra thrill in life, and blow me if you don't take liberties with your knitting patterns. On consideration of your bad taste jibes, we thought about getting Les Dennis to take over the letter's page, but he's much too funny for our readers. Hey, but you can join my 'caring circle'

SBD

Dear Yob,
I am writing to you from the space ship 'Yo Man.' My whole crew, were killed when we collided with a rogue elephant's buttock. Currently, I am orbiting the planet Gormos. My only companions are a newborn owl and





Christian Ward's Hulk's face needs a good flannel.

a Megadrive with Altered Beast and Dynamite Duke which I had for breakfast yesterday. The only food I have left are 100 years' worth of bird food, a tin of meatballs, an owl, mushy peas and a packet of custard. I was wondering if you had interesting recipes you might share with me? Maybe you could send a team of crazy crocos to save me, if it's no trouble. Please write back I'm lonely and I'm losing my sanity.
Yours with a pinch of salt.
Jones, Somewhere In Space.
YOB:Yes, try this: take the owl, the meatballs, and the bird food (Trill is preferable), and stuff them up your ass. Then spend the rest of the time farting breadcrumbs and not wasting our time. This recipe is available on a sheet to anyone who sends in a SAE. Mind you, enjoy your time in space, as it's the only chance of re-entry you'll ever get...

CABBAGEY

Dear Yob,
I am extremely sad. For Christmas I asked my Mum for a game called Super Street Fighter Turbo on the Megadrive. On Christmas I did not get what I wanted. I owned the Megadrive for two years. Now I can't play Super Street Fighter Turbo I was very sad. I wanted to complete the game. I was extremely sad.
Anthony and Louisa Cel,
YOB:No, no, no. You are STILL extremely sad. You cannot write properly, your sentence structuring is abysmal, and you probably couldn't get to grips with the six-button pad needed for the game anyway. You are both an example of how the sale of video games should be strictly controlled. I hope when they separate you, the one that's left can at least beat Chun-Li.

TRUMPET

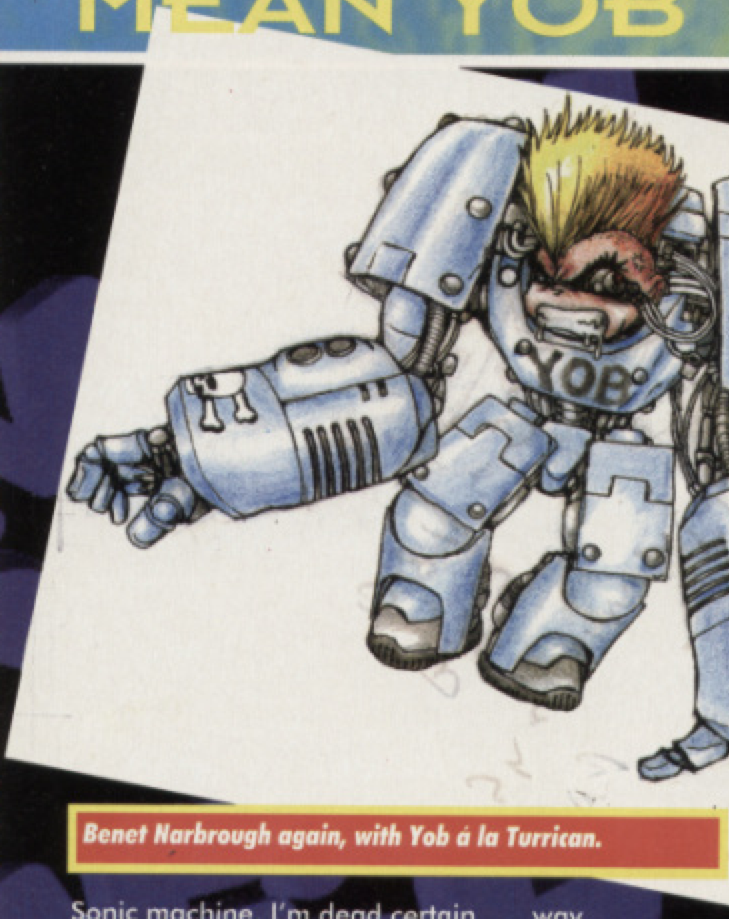
Dear Yob,
After reading your last issue including some info about the 'Sega Mars' I was quite surprised.
This has got to be a joke, right? What's next? The 'Sega Venus' obviously. If this is true, what should I buy? Look, I 'm a great fan of the Virtua games which are also coming out on the 'Mars' and the Saturn. What shall I do? Buy Virtua Racing on the Megadrive, then work for three years to get a Mars — which will by that time be an old machine for its time, and then get an improved version of Virtua Racing? I will have no social life anymore. And then the Saturn arrives! I'm going totally crazy! I also like other games, such as the Streets Of Rage games and all Street Fighter games. Where should I get the money to buy them all? Sega is totally ripping me off!! I'm desperate, and I don't know what to buy, so please print this letter and give me an honest answer
Erik Kuijpers, Gemert, The Netherlands.
YOB:You HAVE a social life? Oh, you must be fitting in your letter-writing to video games mags between dates with your many girlfriends. If I were you, I'd be really interested in a new development called the 'Sega Life'. It's so real, it's unreal. Rather than just a single room and monitor screen, there are literally thousands of locations, and loads of interactive characters! Don't delay — get one today! I can't really blame you when I think the Smurfs are the only notable thing to emerge from Holland. Apart from that horrible cheese with the red skin...

LADY-POPS

Dear Yob,
Recently, whilst on a holiday in Rhyl, I discovered an arcade full of seemingly 'bogus' machines. For instance, a Street Fighter 2 machine with no punch buttons, a Snow Bros machine without a two-player option, and a Sonic machine. The said Sonic machine had exactly the same title screen and demonstration of different zones — but the demo only lasted two or three seconds!
Has this arcade bought new cabinets and placed the old games inside? Is this legal? As for the

B. Nartbrough selects his faveStreetfighter characters.





Benet Narbrough again, with Yob á la Turrican.

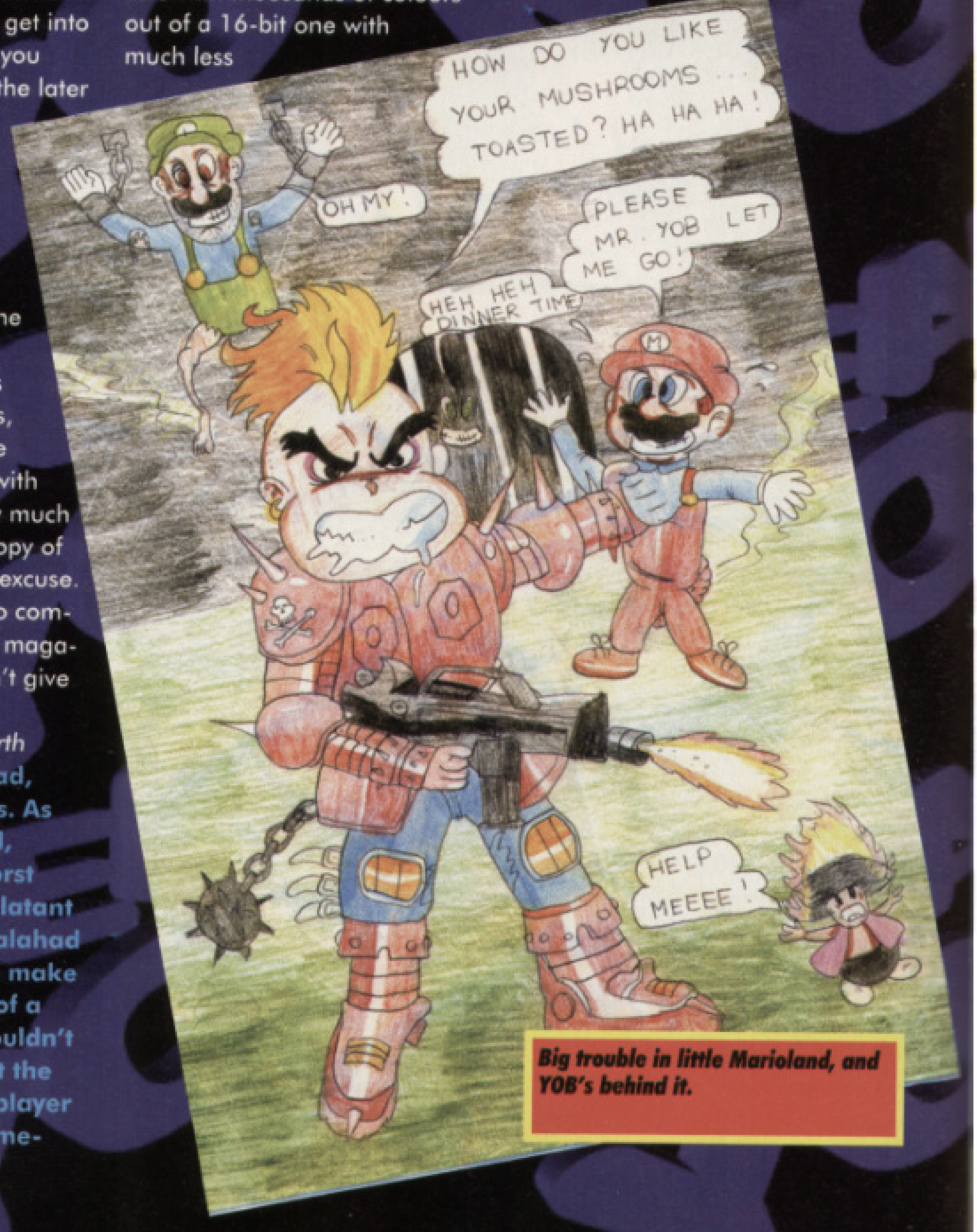
Sonic machine, I'm dead certain there is a Megadrive inside the cabinet. So should I contact Sega and give them the whereabouts of this arcade? Please help...
Nonameagain, Clwyd (Probably)
YOB:They've probably just lumped a few old boards into even older cabinets. There's a chippy just down the road from the MEAN MACHINES offices which has a Street Fighter machine without any hard punch buttons! As for the Sonic 'machine', it's probably one of the clapped out MegaTech cabinets which appeared and disappeared a year or so back. Certainly not enough to get your undies in a twist for — especially since they belong to your Mum...

'GET OUT AND WALK, DONALD'

Dear Yob,
I am writing to you to complain about your extremely scathing and insulting review of Dracula for the Megadrive a few months ago. I have recently acquired a copy and I am absolutely disgusted that you gave it such a bad rating. You included the most boring screenshots and you nit-picked at every little detail. The sound is very good almost all the way through, and that goes for the graphics, too. Some of the levels have very atmospheric and well-drawn backdrops and the bosses are great, too. If you had taken the time to actually get into the game and finished it, you would have realised that the later levels are a lot better. I have now completed the game and the end sequence is spectacular, with a large digitised shot of Dracula from the film, and then a scene where the castle collapses.
I usually think your mag is one of the best for reviews, but this time I think maybe you've gone a bit too far with your criticism. I doubt very much that you used an earlier copy of the game so you have no excuse. I have never had reason to complain about your excellent magazine before so please, don't give me the chance to again.
Simon McCallum, Letchworth
YOB:Don't bleed my head, man, I just do the letters. As far as Steve's concerned, Dracula is one of the worst games ever. It's just a blatant rip-off of the existing Galahad code, and an attempt to make a few quid on the back of a decent licence. Also, shouldn't a game try to impress at the start, and not force the player to keep playing until something smart happens? If you ask us, Psygnosis inherited Dracula's blood-sucking tendencies when they released it. Anyway, what should we know, with thirty odd years of combined gaming experience and years in journalism?

WHISTLER

Dear Yob,
I bought issue 19 of your rather fab mag and found the April Fool inside. I was looking at the Saturn, and I was very excited when I read about The Mars.' But then I remembered what you've printed a few issues back, the one with the Robocop Vs. Termie cover. In the Saturn-special, you said that it wasn't possible to make it compatible with any previous systems, because it's that different from anything seen yet. You cannot make a 32-bit console with thousands of colours out of a 16-bit one with much less colours, which can't produce impressive polygons without a DSP chip.If I'm right about this, send me a game (or a Saturn???). I would be very happy with the following: Virtua Racing, Landstalker, Sonic, Spinball, Eternal Champies, Mallet Legend or the Sonic extra level update disk.
A. Nonymous, No Fixed Abode
YOB:At the time of the Robo/Term issue, it wasn't deemed possible to create a 32bit add-on. However, it can be put down to a thing called progress. by the way, I'm sure you would be very happy with a Saturn or any of the above – me, I'd be happy with a large laser or a wad of cash sticking out of my back pocket. The difference is, I don't write into magazines demanding them...



Big trouble in little Marioland, and YOB's behind it.



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SEGA
SEGA MEGA DRIVE
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As he tossed and turned, Steve had a recurring dream. A giant stone golem was knocking down the houses in his childhood home of Southbourne. Then he saw it. A plunger. Steve pulled it from where it was stuck to the pavement. Miraculously, the golem stopped. Steve replaced the plunger and the stone goliath resumed its destruction. Rushing the plunger to the village council he showed them its powers. Heroically, he burned the plunger and the creature collapsed. A tin of Quality Street was his reward, but it vanished when he woke up. Just as it had when he saved Southbourne from ants by pouring boiling water over them...
If you require help from Steve, write to:

THE 'BAN THE COFFEE REVELS' CLUB Q&A,
MEAN MACHINES SEGA,
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London,
EC1R 3AU

PLASTIC CARS

Dear Steve,
Could you please answer some questions for me.
1. Will there ever be a football management game for the Megadrive. If so what, and when will it be released?
2. What is the best joypad for the Megadrive?
3. What is the best adventure game for the Megadrive?
4. Will Super SF Turbo be released for the Megadrive in the near future?
5. is PGA Euro Tour any good?
6. Are EA thinking of making another FIFA?
7. Will the coin-op, Taito Cup Football, ever be released for the Megadrive or any other console?
8. And, lastly: how can you say Eternal Champions is any good — it's crap!
James Pretty, Hammersmith
STEVE:My, that's an unfortunate surname you have there, my Pretty (snigger!). 1. Imagineer are working on Kevin Keegan Player Manager, but there's still no firm release date. 2. The six-button one from Sega. 3. Landstalker. 4. It seems likely Capcom will incorporate the Turbo moves into the forthcoming Super SF conversion. 5. Yep, but not if you've got PGA 2. 6. Yup. 7. Nope. 8. Like this: 'Eternal Champions is any good.' Easy, huh?

GI JOE

Dear Steve,
Please answer these few humble questions for me (beg, sniffle).
1. Who in your opinion is the best all-round character in Street Fighter 2?
2. Will Body Blows on the Amiga ever come out for the Megadrive?
3. Does World Heroes look any good?
4. Is Art Of Fighting 2 going to be converted to the Megadrive?
5. If you had a modem, would it be possible to have a twenty-player beat 'em up or a racing game where everybody controlled a fighter or a driver?
6. Can you say hi to Whitam?
Fred, Alford
STEVE:1. Ken. 2. Probably not — but who needs it! 3. It's an average beat 'em up. 4. Yes, but not for a while. 5. Theoretically the driving game should be possible, but the beat 'em up would probably only be a tournament where two players fought at a time. 6. No.

IRON-ON TRANSFERS

Dear Steve,
Could you answer these questions for me please.
1. When will the VR unit be released for the Megadrive in the UK?
2. How much will it cost?
3. When will the Saturn be released in the UK?
4. How much will it cost?
5. How much will Saturn games cost, such as Virtua Fighters and Virtua Soccer?
6. Are there going to be any add-ons for the Saturn?
7. Are there any other Mega-CD one-on-one beat 'em ups planned apart from Rise Of The Robots?
8. Are there going to be any new systems released within the next two years?



9. If so, when will they be coming out?
10. Is Fatal Fury 2 coming out for the Megadrive?
11. If so, when in the UK?
12. Are there any new wrestling games on the way?
SJ Morrison, Irvine
STEVE:1. No firm date, but Sega are still hoping to have it out for Christmas. 2. It hasn't been confirmed. 3. Not until mid-1995. 4. See 2. 5. See 2 and 4. 6. Yes, a food mixer, a sandwich toaster and a full car add-on complete with gears and steering wheel – in other words, see 2 and 4. Again. 7. Nope. 8. There's rumours of a 16-bit handheld, but nothing new from Sega apart from what we've told you about. 9. See 2, 4 and 6. 10. It's out on import now. 11. This is becoming a litany. I'll give you a clue, the answer appears somewhere in this paragraph. 12. Yes, Acclaim have another WWF game on the cards.



GAME AND WATCH

Dear Steve,
Please put your large noggin to good use and answer these questions.
1. Does the Mega-CD play audio CDs?
2. How about a cheat for Road Rash 2?
3. Is Cliffhanger on the Megadrive any good?
4. In an American comic I saw an ad for a Sega game requiring 3-D glasses. When's it coming out in Britain?
Jamie Gilchrist, Edinburgh
PS: What's 49x6527 divided by 62?
STEVE: 1. Yes. 2. How about you get stuffed? 3. One of the worst things I've ever had the misfortune to see. Last Action Hero being the worst! 4. It's a game called Jim Power. There's no release date for the UK yet, but I can tell you now it's nothing more than average and the 3D doesn't work that well. The answer is 5158.4354839, can I go now?

POLYTHENE POSTMAN SUIT

Dear Steve,
I own a Master System, so here are some questions I need to ask you.
1. On Mortal Kombat is there a cheat which allows you to get the spiked pit working, so that when the 'Finish Him/Her' message appears they can be punched into it?
2. Will there be a Mortal Kombat film with all the gore in it. If so what certificate will it be?
3. When MK2 hits the streets will it be coming out for the Master System? If so, will it include all the fighters, their death moves, the bonus character rounds. And when will it be out?
4. Please list these games from best to worst: Robocod, Fantastic Dizzy, Krusty's Super Funhouse, Cool Spot, Cosmic Spacehead, Jungle Book.
Martin Smith, Southshields
STEVE:1. Nope. 2. Only a SF film is planned, with Jean-Claude Van Damme starring as Guile. 3. Acclaim aren't releasing an MS version. 4. Krusty, Cool Spot, Jungle Book, Robocod, Spacehead, Dizzy.

MASTER SYSTEM

Dear Steve,
Here are some challenging questions for your brainy self.
1. What are the Friendship and Babality moves in MK2?
2. I am totally mad about computers (especially Sega) and I'm quite good at art. It is my dream to design computer and console games. Please can you tell he how old I have to be to get a job with either a console magazine or a leading company?
3. Is it me or are Nintendo totally crap?
Becky minter, Grately
STEVE:1. When you have defeated your opponent they are either given a gift or regressed to a baby. Basically, Midway were going to the other extreme to appease the censors who kicked up a stink about the gore. 2. You could start approaching the companies now, and send in plans and things. However, designers need fluent Mac skills and a good eye for design, so it'll be a while before you're ready to join a mag or company full-time. 3. I don't know, are you crap?

A COPY OF PELE

Dear Steve,
Please answer these questions for me.
1. I'm pleased with Tengen's conversion of Gauntlet. Is a conversion of Atari's Gauntlet 2 on the cards?
2. Will 1993 F1 World Championship Heavenly Symphony be released for the Mega-CD in the UK?
3. What about Monkey Island?
4. Why don't Mean Machines use more photos for screenshots than screen grabs?
5. Please explain the different between pulse code modulation and frequency modulation.
Gareth Crowley, Thirsk
STEVE:1. Nope. 2. Nope. 3. As soon as JVC get their UK Sega licence. 4. because screenshots take ages and are never as good or flexible as grabs. 5. No.

PENCIL SETS

Dear Steve,
Please answer these questions for me.
1. What's the best platform game on the Megadrive at the moment apart from Sonic 3?
2. Do you think I should get SOR3, Super SF2 or MK2 for my Megadrive?
3. Is Castlevania any good?
4. Will the following games be out for the Master System and Game Gear: SOR3, Sonic 3, any Street Fighter 2 games, Sonic Spinball?
5. Are there any Snooker games for the Megadrive? If so where can I get them?
6. I have a Japanese Megadrive, why won't the following games work on it: SF2, Jurassic Park, Robo Vs Terminator, Sonic 3, Rocket Knight, Aladdin, Tiny Toons?
7. When is SOR2 coming out for the Game Gear? And will Lemmings 2 be coming out for it?
Chris Chin, Sherborne
STEVE:1. Dynamite Headdy — but it's not out yet. Hah! 2. Well, as only SOR3 is actually out and is the only one likely to be out before September, I'd recommend you get that. 3. Yup. 4. Spinball is heading for the Gear, but that's it. 5. The only decent one is Virgin's Jimmy White licence, and that's not out yet. 6. because of a little device known as a 'Lock Out Chip.' 7. No release date yet, and no.

His eyelids fluttered as he fell into REM sleep. Steve tossed and turned, but a strange smile overtook his peaceful face and his left leg twitched every few seconds for no apparent reason. Just what was he dreaming about...



HOT. TE



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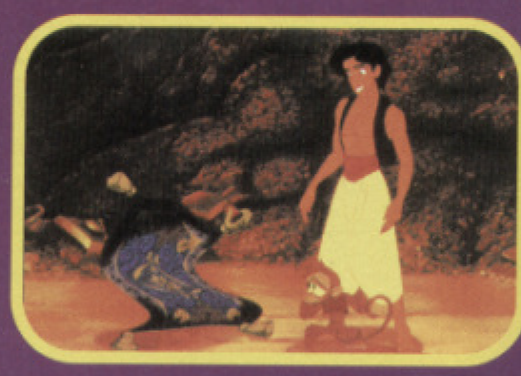
PAULS TIPS

Hi there Mean Machiners. Welcome to the Mean Machines satellite, orbiting twenty miles above the Earth. I am Captain Paul! Here I sit at the Central Control Podule playing games day in day out, but I care not. It is my trusted duty to the fair citizens of Earth to explore the dark infinity of the Multi-Dimensions, seeking out new and better gaming tips. Sad? Yes. Lonely? YES! But it my chosen path, for I am The Groovy Gaming Guardian! The Joypad Jive Commando! Proud servitor of the dark cosmic force known only as VIDEON! Of course, I am not without friends. Well, visitors anyway. Often, my intergalactic chums stop by. There's Xantos-9 from Planet Theron, the League of Squid-o-nauts and my dear pal Whitley Strieber, alien investigator. All have joined me in my many daring games adventures at one time or another. But don't go thinking I've forgotten you, my chuckling gamesters. Without your perpetual stream of gaming tips, my cosmic task would be impossible. So stay vigilant and if you find any console secrets contact me via your Captain Paul communicator watches or, if you're not a member of my Cosmic Games Legion, send them to this address, CAPTAIN PAUL, HEAR MY CALL! I HAVE A TIP TO BEAT THEM ALL! MEAN MACHINES SATELLITE, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU, EARTH. Now, seeing as you're here I may as well give you a tour of the inner sanctums of the Mean Machines Satellite. Gamesters Assemble!



Join me now, gamesters, as I enter the Brain Room of the mighty Mean Machines Satellite. To the ungamed eye, it might look like this chamber is filled with a mish-mash of flashing computers and whirring machines, but to any member of my trusty Cosmic Games Legion it's obvious what is here. None other than VIDEON-1, the Supreme Intelligence! It is VIDEON alone that writes, draws and colours the pages of Mean Machines. Drawing on raw cosmic flux from beyond the Multi Dimensions, he combines this untamed matter using the brute power of his galactic mind. Even for such a mighty mental force, VIDEON can only perform this task once an Earth month. Normally only Professor Merrett is allowed to read the untreated words of VIDEON, but just this once I'll let you

Aladdin



First stop, Professor Merrett's laboratory! It's here that our super-psychic leader spends his days constructing bizarre new gadgets for the crew. In fact, here he is now, fitting Claire's brain back into her Robo-Girl body. Why if it wasn't for The Prof she'd still be nothing more than a brain in a cryogenic pickling jar, just like that Walt Disney fellow. And speaking of Disney, here's a pair of top tips for his Aladdin game.

On the desert stage, stand underneath the washing line, facing right, so that when Aladdin leans forward his head is directly underneath the Mickey Mouse ears. If it's done correctly he should gain an extra life. That one comes from R Robinson of Rotherham.

Also, enter the option menu by pressing start and then enter A, C, A, C, A, C, A, C, B, B, B, B. A digitised picture of Dave Perry should appear together with a level select and infinite energy option. Gamester David Yelland of Stafford supplied that one.

SONIC 3

gamesters take a sneaky look. Why, here comes some hot info now.

LEVEL SELECT

Krrrk... kchk...Videon has a hot new tip for Sonic 3. Krrr-b-b-b-chk...Level Select. Without Game Genie! When Sega logo appears at beginning of game wait until background turns black and...krrrk...quickly enter UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, UP, UP, UP, UP. A chime should sound. Nrrk. Now when the title screen appears, press down and a new option should appear underneath the normal ones. Select it and, by the moons of Zantos, the level select is yours.

DEBUG MODE

When selecting a krrk...chug...chug...level using the Level Select cheat, hold down A. Now when Sonic appears press B. He should turn into a ring. Use A to cycle through the different objects, press C to put them down and B to turn back into Sonic. By pausing the game and pressing A you can return to the Level Select screen. Krrk.

Wow, thanks VIDEON! What a hot tip. Tha...

INVINCIBILITY

Silence fool! Krrk. When the title screen comes up, press UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, LEFT, RIGHT, RIGHT, A, A, B, B, C, C, A, B, C and Start. Sonic should now be invincible for the whole game. Krrk. There is more. Input. Input.

WIN TWO-PLAYER MODE EVERY TIME!

When playing the two-player mode...krrk...select Tails and pick Balloon Park as the course. Now fly over the balloon nearest the check point and drop onto it when the timer reaches 1. Press left when you hit the balloon and keep it held down. Tails should go through the scenery and fly right up to the top of the level, thus beating your opponent every time. Krrk. Videon out.

ECCO

Here we are in the Mean Machines Hall of Fame. This is where we hang all the pictures of our good buddies who've helped us in our many adventures. This picture, for instance, is of Ecco the Dolphin. Why, I'll never forget how he helped us when the evil M Bison attacked the Satellite with his army of robot warriors. Using his mastery of Aquatic Kung-Fu, he defeated the strike force single-handedly, giving Professor Merrett time to crack the code on Bison's deadly Graviton Bomb! Anyway, here's a level select for Ecco's own game, entitled Ecco the Dolphin. You can thank gamester, P Brodie of Sydney, Australia for this one.

Enter a level and make make Ecco turn around to face in the opposite direction. As he turns, pause the game so that he's facing you. Now enter RIGHT, B, C, B, C, DOWN, C and UP. Do it correctly and a Debug Menu will appear allowing you to select any level, make Ecco invincible, speed up the tempo of any tune, read all the messages and even face off against the final boss.

MORTAL KOMBAT

Ah, here we are in the Lethal Lounge. It's here that the Mean Machines Crew hone their gaming powers under the close observation of Professor Merrett, up there in the viewing booth. Boy, you should see it when he sets the Fatal Factor up to Ten. Frap-ray beams fly around, circular saws slice through the almost-indestructible Thrangdinium walls and of course, there's The Incredible Folding Floor to face! Still, this training is essential if top crime-busters like Oz-Man expect to survive the hazards of Superspace. Why next time he could be faced by the dreaded THREE HIDDEN CHARACTERS FROM MORTAL KOMBAT as discovered by gamester, A Mathers of Belfast. Okay console fiends, here's how to get 'em!

REPTILIAN SONYA

You may select any character except Sonya.

1. Enter the DULLARD cheat (Last seen in ish #14, gamefreaks!) and set the PLAN BASE to 4.
2. Now enable FLAGS 0, 2, 5 and 6.
3. Set the 1st MAP to 'WARRIOR SHRINE' and get fighting!

DON'T get Reptile out on the first PIT stage you come across. Be patient, gamesters, and wait until you get to the second PIT stage which should be on the 1st Endurance Match. Try and get a double flawless and a fatality (if you get hit, you won't be able to reach Reptile, so just keep getting beaten until you get around to the PIT stage background again. You have infinite credits remember!). Now you get to face the Reptile! Never fear though, you only have to hit him once, all thanks to Flag 0. Sonya will now appear, except that she looks messed up and performs some all new moves such as a freezing Sonic Blast and a strange hologram attack that acts like Scorpion's harpoon.

REPTILIAN RAYDEN

To get Reptile Rayden to appear in The Pit, use the same method, but do not select Rayden as your character and set the PLAN BASE to 1. Reptile Rayden can perform a cannonball attack, a wrestling clothes-line and a squishy uppercut among other things.

REPTILIAN CAGE

Getting a Reptile Cage is a little more complex. Firstly, you cannot use Kano, Liu Kang or Cage. With the four characters that are left you can use the same method, but, with the exception of Rayden, the PLAN BASES must be set as follows: Scorpion - 2, Sub Zero - 2 and Sonya - 4. Also for Sub Zero the 1ST MAP must be set to PALACE GATES. Reptile Cage can perform a green freezing fireball, a Dragon Elbow punch and performs a deadly floating spine-removal fatality.

Stephen Buckley of Rochestown has sent in this tip to make Sub Zero or Scorpion look like Reptile. Go to secret options screen and enter FLAG 3.

Pick Sub-Zero and get to Reptile. Then halfway through the match press A, B, and C on joypad 2 and press START. Now, when player 2 goes to select Sub-Zero or Scorpion, they are green just like Reptile.



GUNSTAR HEROES



Gosh, that name brings back memories. Why I haven't seen those chappies since the Cosmic Superheroes Colouring Annual last year, when we all teamed up to defeat the dreaded Krool and his Insect Legion. If only we'd known this cheat, maybe Claire would still have her human body!
On the fifth level, there are some barrels on the ground. The last barrel cannot be destroyed because there's a bad guy in it who runs off the screen. Shortly after this happens, an icon-dispensing bird flies onto the screen from the left. If you follow it you can get right to the end of the level whilst continually recharging your energy.

MICRO MACHINES

Now here's an interesting item. Inside this jam jar is Shrunken City Of Kalibos, capital city of planet Ooberon-10, the home-world of Lucy Hickman AKA Lady Lightning. Why is it so small? Well, it was miniaturised by the evil warmonger Barakus as a display for his trophy room. That was until my Cosmic Legionnaires rescued it from his rocket-powered Battle-Planet. Unfortunately, Professor Merrett couldn't return the city to its normal size, but if you peek inside you can see they're quite happy. Why, right now they're having a little race and from the look of it they're using these all-new Micro Machines tips too!

UNLIMITED CREDITS
During a race, pause the game and press B, DOWN, C, DOWN, UP, DOWN, LEFT, DOWN. Unpause the game and you'll have unlimited credits.

TOUGHER OPPONENTS
First, go out and find friends who can play Micro Machines better than you. Then play against them. Ho ho, just a joke, gamesters. Actually, pause the game and press LEFT, DOWN, UP, DOWN, RIGHT, DOWN, A and DOWN. Tougher opponents are now yours.

FASTER VEHICLE
Pause the game and press UP, DOWN, A, B, LEFT, RIGHT and UP. Don't forget to unpause the game or the cars won't go very fast at all!

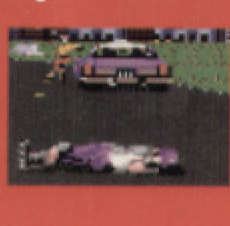


SKITCHIN'

Of course, between adventures the Mean Machines Crew often enjoy some light recreation, which is why we have the massive Games Arena! Here we race around on roller-boots, catching lifts on the back of maintenance droids. Unfortunately, Yob always wins thanks to his telescopic throngdinium arms. Still, maybe we'll stand a better chance thanks to Ed Hayden from Windsor.He's sent in these codes for all the levels of Skitchin', which come complete with large sums of money and awesome arrays of weaponry.

STAGE 1: 0ANU NGRC YO01
STAGE 2: SJSU QA1P AFR0
STAGE 3: S2FU YYQP DLRN
STAGE 4: F21K 0OIG WEF4
STAGE 5: 0J0U 5XSL YYJH
STAGE 6: R11W YBY5 XA3G
STAGE 7: 4U32 4YZC AHVJ
STAGE 8: 2AZU ECGL MBNW
STAGE 9: FUOK 5CFU R2DE
STAGE 10: F4PM 3NV4 R1HQ
STAGE 11: 0DMK JXFY SAZH
STAGE 12: TQU1 T3VV GSMP

Also, by entering 1JAI 0KTO GBCW you can start on the Washington stage with $16,409.



RANGER-X

Who is the mysterious Ranger X? He who travels the cosmic highways on his space tricycle and commands the power of the awesome Energy Galactic! Who knows, but one thing's for sure, he likes fruit! On the third level of his game there are tiny red apples on the trees. Shoot them down and then catch them to recharge your energy.

NBA JAM

Last month, you'll remember how the Mean Machines Crew uncovered a dastardly plot by the Miniature Man, who'd shrunk President Clinton and hidden him in an NBA Jam cartridge! Well after we rescued him, Professor Merrett was contacted by Dennis Huddleton of Odsal through his psychic stethoscope, informing him that yet more people were still trapped in there! To free them, just select "YES" to enter your initials and then input the following three letter codes. Don't enter the last letter of each code though, just put the cursor over it. Then hold down START together with the corresponding Joypad button.

CHARACTER	INITIALS	BUTTON
RED NINJA	NIN	A
KABUKI	QB	A
SCRUFFY	ROD	B
WEASEL	SAX	C
P-FUNK	DIS	C

LOTUS II

Lotus II? Is that foul space-slug back from the Outer Dimensions? The last time that bloated parasite attacked us it ate Gus whole! We thought we'd lost him for good, but then we'd forgotten about Gus' aberenbou* body structure. He is, after all, the Sub-Plutonic Man! With its first bite, Lotus II expanded until it popped and out flew Gus, much to our relief. But how could Lotus II have survived such a blast? Oh, I see, this is about Lotus II – the game. Heh, well anyway, if you type in POD PLEASE as the name for Player One and start the game, a hidden game of Space Invaders will appear. Now you can blast as many galactic bugs as you like. That one comes from Andrew Bates of Congresbury.

CAN YOU CRACK IT?



THIS IS A STEREOGRAM. STARE AT THE IMAGE,
DO NOT FOCUS ON IT AND EVENTUALLY ALL WILL APPEAR.

Trust Marko

GAME GEAR

LEMMINGS

Ah! finally. This is my room – Captain Paul's grotto! It's here that I often have tea parties with my dear friends, Pac-Man, Sparkster and The Lemmings. And Ariel the Little Mermaid. If she doesn't have a head ache or isn't washing her hair. Or going to Skaroid-6 for the rest of her life. Why, those cheeky young hams, they're always hiding sausage rolls under the settee and throwing cream buns at each other. But I love them anyway, so here's a level select for their game.
Turn on machine, hold down buttons 1+2 and press UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT. A chime should sound. Go to password screen and find a level select. That one comes from Stephen Buckley of Rochestown.

WIMBLEDON TENNIS

Gosh, isn't the Game Gear incredible? Why, with games like Wimbledon Tennis it gives sporting superstars such as Jimmy Conners and John McEnroe the chance to keep up their training whilst on secret missions behind enemy lines. Anyway, here's a password from Stephen Buckley of Rochestown which I just hadda call TOP POINTS ON THE LAST MATCH!
JIK KLH
XEH OJM

Oh, and when you're on game 3 (when you are serving) on the left hand side of the court, serve the ball from the place the computer puts you, push right and the ball will go out. Serve again, push left and the opponent misses every time. Until next month gamesters, See ya!
*The secret meaning of Aberenbou will be revealed next month!

MEGADRIVE

Virtua Racing

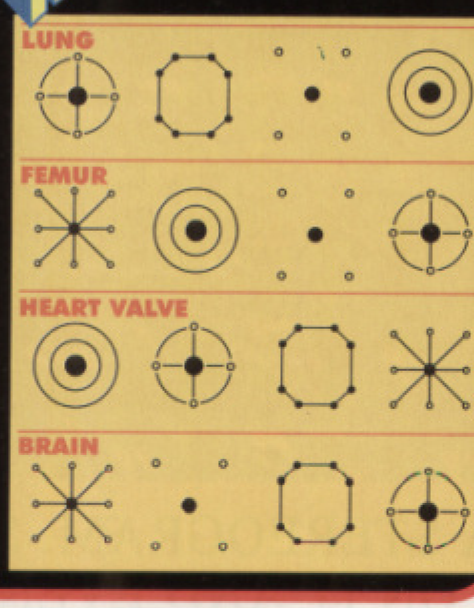
Hey gamesters! Come over here and look at this. It's one of the Zum Guns used by the Mirror Men of Mars. After we battled them beyond the glass gateway, Sub-Plutonic Boy (as he was called then) wrestled the device off them. A device that reverses any image! And look, it seems Sega have used it on their new game, Virtua Racing , because it has a mirror mode! Just consecutively attain pole position in each course and a new reversed Virtua Racing icon will appear on the game select screen. Choose it and you can race all three courses the wrong way!



MEGA-CD

MICROCOSM

Prepare yourselves now, as we enter the Mean Machines Museum. It's here that we keep all the strange artifacts we've found on our adventures. Like this, the Cosmicroscope! Peer through it and you can see into THE MICROCOSM. There, trapped for all eternity is our old friend, test-pilot Chuck Power sitting in his miniaturised jet-fighter as he races through its many tunnels in search of freedom. If only he could see these passcodes from Ryan Hunter of Green Hills, perhaps he could escape!





MASTER SYSTEM

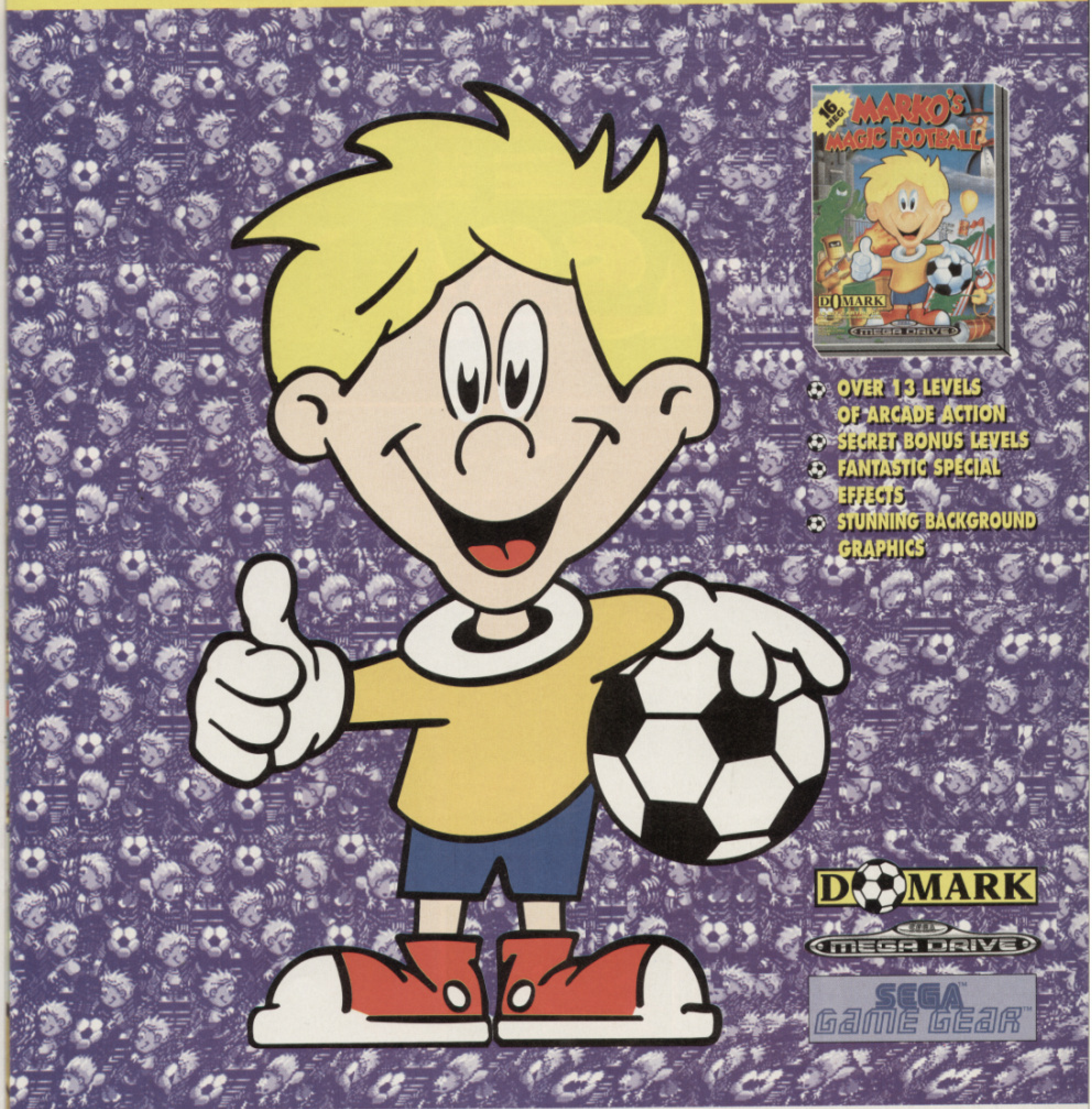
THE JUNGLE BOOK

Here in the Mean Machines library can be found the Jungle Book, a mysterious tome documenting every known shrub in the Multiverse. It was brought back from one of Professor Merrett's expeditions to Planet Jungulus. Unfortunately, he also brought back a symbiotic alien vegetable that stuck to the back of his neck and tried to take him over. After much struggling we finally removed it, but the Prof still shows the scars — he now has tomatoes instead of ears.
Here's a cheat.
Turn on the game and when the Sega logo appears, hold down buttons 1 and 2 together and rotate the D-pad. A chime will sound when the Virgin logo appears, showing the cheat has worked. Start the game and you can select any level you want.
Mark Richardson of Liverpool provided that one.

THE KICK BOXING CHAMP

Otherwise known to you regular gamesters as Oz-Man. Yep, having trained himself since before birth in the secret arts of Kenryu Kyokendokro Kung Fu, Oz-Man is the ultimate foot-fighter in the universe. Still, even for the Oz these passcodes from Matt and Jamie Hankinson of Orford could prove useful!
ROUND 1- BLAZES
ROUND 2 - FIREWAY
ROUND 3 - MAGMA
ROUND 4 - VOLCANICS
ROUND 5 - NITROGEANS
ROUND 6 - NEATRON
ROUND 7 - DRAGON
ROUND 8 - MONSTER
ROUND 9 - SLAYER
ROUND 10 - FREEWAY
ROUND 11 - IFONLY
ROUND 12 - PAULINES
ROUND 13 - CROSSROADS
ROUND 14 - FIGHTER
ROUND 15 - TAKEOUT
FINAL ROUND - KNOCKOUT
Enter BARWARS and you can win each fight with one hit.

MARKO'S MAGIC!



Welcome to the world of Marko, a world of cartoon madness. Experience the addictive blend of football skills and platform action that combine to make a superb gameplaying experience. Add the most incredible graphics ever to be seen and the result is **Marko's Magic Football.** It's just like playing a cartoon.

Just as we were putting this issue to bed, we got a call from JVC. 'Come and see Rebel Assault', they said. Bearing in mind it's one of the most anticipated Mega-CD titles ever, we couldn't refuse. So, here for your pleasure, we are proud to present the first PROPER and completely exclusive look at JVC's tribute to the Star Wars trilogy...

STAR WARS REBEL ASSAULT

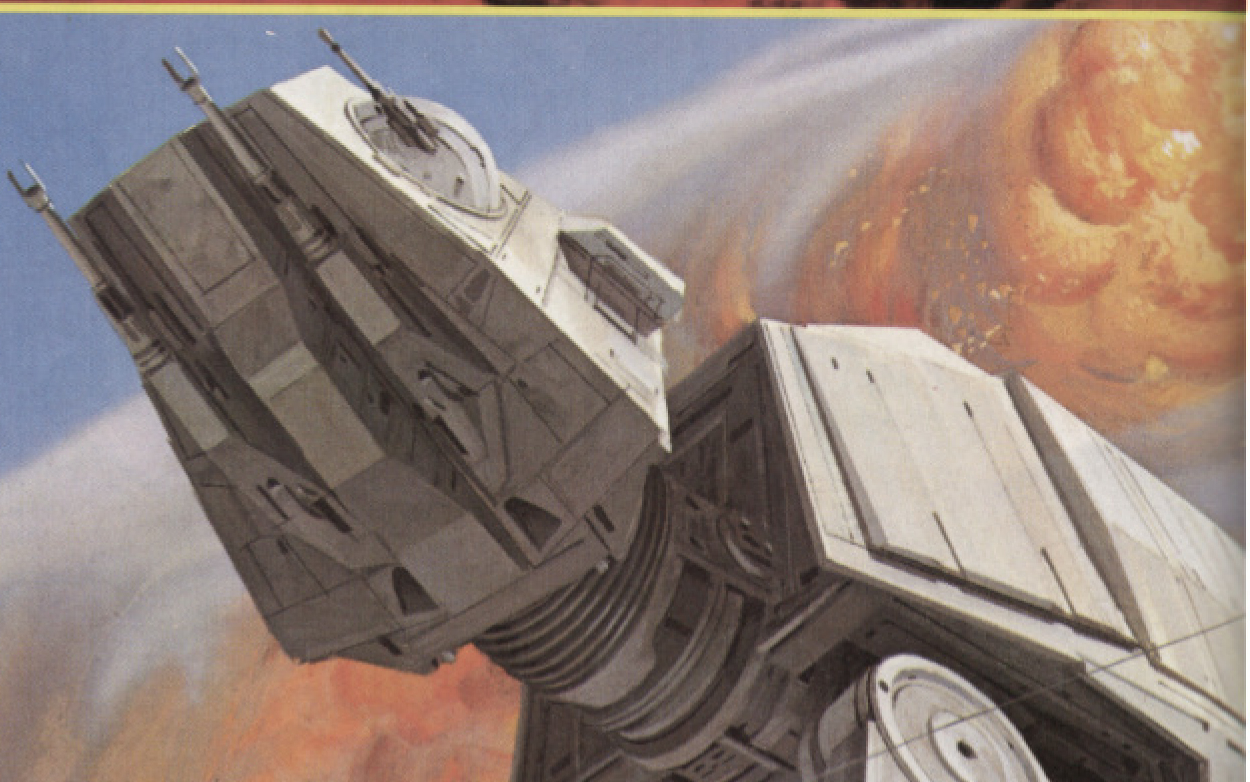
A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away...

In 1977 BS (Before Spielberg), George Lucas introduced us to a plucky band of freedom fighters. Starting on the desert planet of Tatooine, we met adopted farmer's son, Luke Skywalker, and his two recently-acquired droids, R2D2 and C3-PO. Whilst prising lumps of grit from R2's shell, Luke inadvertently triggered an SOS from what appeared to be a princess. The rest, as they say, is history. Luke consequently teams up with Jedi master, Obi-Wan Kenobi, smuggler Han Solo and his Wookie sidekick, and Princess Leia. Together, they joined the rebel alliance against Lord Vader and the evil empire, and a classic trilogy of films were born.

Such is the popularity of the Star Wars films that, even in these days of Jurassic Park-style effects, they still make fascinating viewing. Star Wars, The Empire Strikes Back, and Return Of The Jedi were, at the time, groundbreaking films which not only had a solid plot running through each, but featured more alien species than countless B-movies.

JVC's Rebel Assault is predominantly based on the first film, with the player making their way through a series of attacks on the empire which culminate on the epic journey along the Death Star's trench as the rebels attempt to locate its weak point — a small exhaust port — and split it open with a missile. However, on your way to this target, the player is dropped into a series of ice stages, reminiscent of Luke adventures on Hoth during The Empire Strikes Back, which also mark the appearance of the empire's AT-AT Walkers.

As of yet, JVC don't have a UK Sega licence, so Rebel Assault is stuck in limbo. However, the CD is currently with Sega for analysis and should be cleared for release for in September. Fingers crossed...



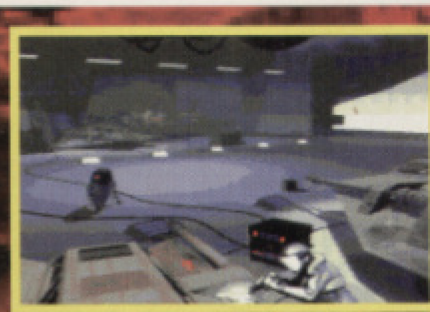


Alert, alert, haircuts coming in at midnight.





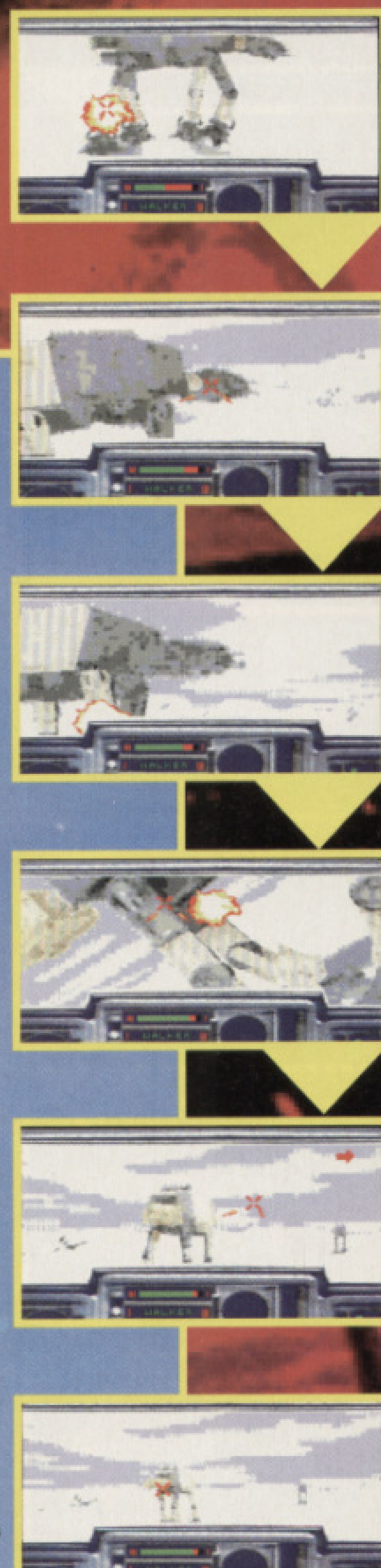
▲ *Death valley rally in the very first mission.*



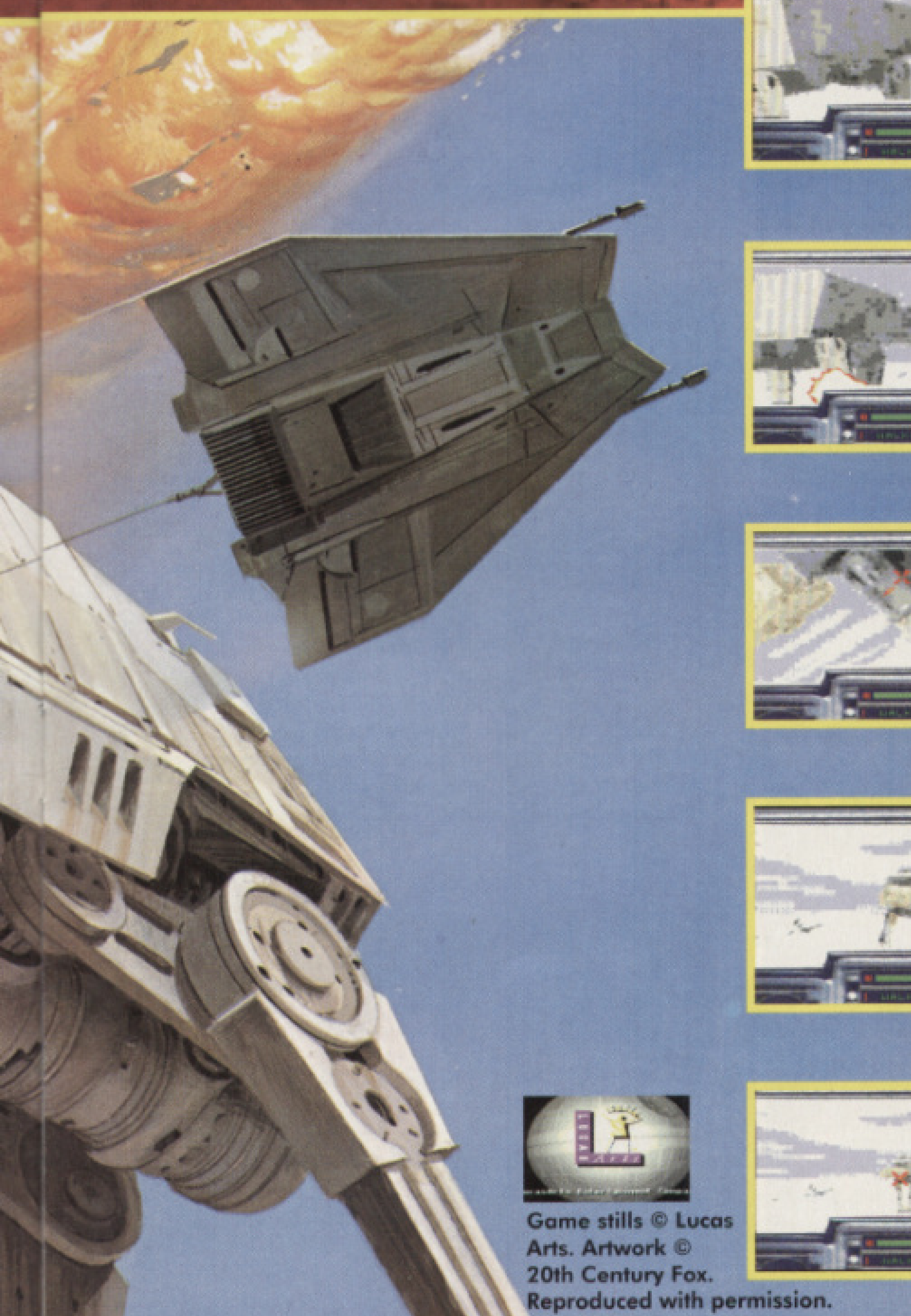
▲ ***The Grant brothers 'clock' some snowspeeders in their repair park.***



▼ ***This sequence shows the spectacular AT-AT stage.***



▲ ***Making as much an impression on the Walker as possible at this distance is a way to complete this stage effortlessly.***



ECHOOTA (HOW RUDE!)

In the past, Mega-CD titles have been criticised for the lack of interaction on the player's part. Tomcat Alley has gone some way to redress the balance, but JVC claim Rebel Assault will combine film footage with playability more so than any other CD title. There are three distinct game styles within Rebel Assault's chapters. For the most part, the action is viewed from behind the player's current ship, with the joypad moving the ship within a narrow area as the pre-filmed backdrops whizz by. Similarly, there are several levels viewed from within the ship, and these offer the player slightly more control as they pick their way through a maze-like caverns. Finally, stand up battles are viewed from behind the unnamed Rookie, as he is shuffled to the left and right and made to duck as he returns fire at oncoming Stormtroopers.

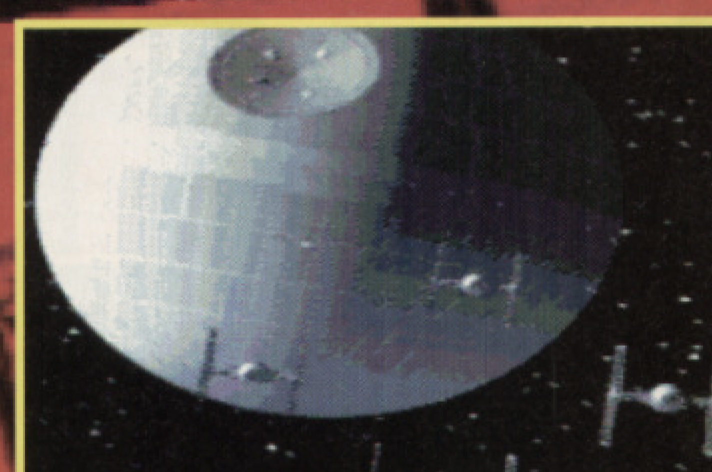


▲ ***The distant plop of TIE fighters exploding in space.***



▲ ***Aaaie! evasive action! We are undone (etc.)***

▼ ***The daunting presence of the Death Star.***



WATCH YOUR MOUTH, KID

Everyone's going on about the gap between films and games shrinking with the advent of CD technology, but Lucas Arts aim to reduce it even further. Rebel Assault features a key cast of five rebel members, each of whom the player is in contact with throughout the game. The player, however, isn't cast as Luke as originally thought, but as the unnamed 'Rookie One' — and these are his wingmen...

Commander Jake Farrell: A space veteran drawn out of retirement for this last-ditch attempt to overthrow the empire. A particularly useful teacher, but scornful of cocky new-bloods.



Commander Ru Murleen: Despite her youth, Murleen is the gal responsible for getting new pilots through their training.



Captain Merrick Sims: Another veteran, with more kills than any other pilot. He's in charge of Blue Squadron, and is an essential ally in the battle for the Death Star.

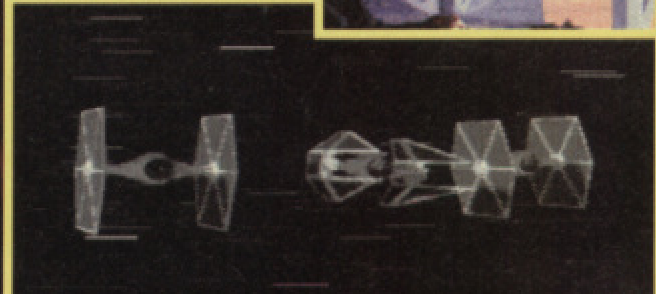


Harris: Harris's father was one of the key figures of the 'old' rebel alliance, and as a result Jnr is expected to live up to his dad's reputation.



Lieutenant Turland Hack: In charge of communications on Tatooine.



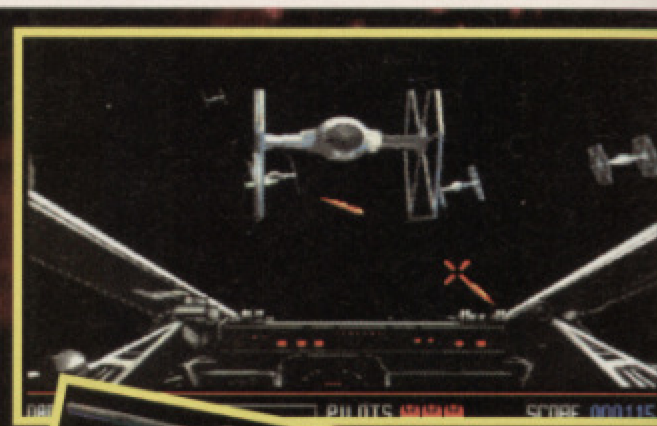


This sequence shows Luke infiltrating the imperial base on Hoth, in a 'shooting gallery' style chapter.



Always shoot a stormtrooper when he's down.

TIEs move across the view at Hyperspeed.







MY FRIEND DOESN'T LIKE YOU...

Lucas Arts have strived to make Rebel Assault as close to the George Lucas movies as possible — even down to the way the screen fades in and out. The action starts on the planet Tatooine with the Rookie player training to join the rebels. From here, the action progresses on a quick tour of duty to a rebel-held ice planet which is under attack from the Empire. Last this long, and you've earned your wings, and are whisked away to the rebel base on Javin where the plans to attack the Death Star are being hatched. Each of the stages leading on to these key points are shown in chapter form, with each stage of the plot made up by four or five chapters.












◄ Lord Vader's personal luxi-loo.





The trench sequence is one of the more exhilirating parts of the game.




▲ *A steeper section of Chapter One's canyon.*







The huge cannon takes a concerted effort to destroy

AREN'T YOU A LITTLE SMALL FOR STORMTROOPER?

As you can see from the screenshots smattered across these pages, Rebel Assault is the Cindy Crawford of video games — ie. a real looker. As the player's X-Wing tears across the canyons of Tatooine, the sand dunes and hills whizz by as such speed it's easy to miss the detailing used. Lucas Arts have used ray-tracing techniques to combine the detail with speed and, even though the Mega-CD's typical graininess is noticeable, no other Sega CD title can touch them. These techniques are exploited further into the game as the player roars across the surface of the Death Star and past Star Destroyers, and the effect is further enhanced as footage from the films is interspersed with the action.



▲ Imperial probes fall to Hoth.



▲ A Walker from a ground perspective.



JABBA NO WONGAH

Whilst ideas such as the AT-AT attack and the tunnel run towards the Death Star's exhaust pipe have been lifted straight from the film, extra meat has been added to the shoot 'em up action. For instance, before the player gets to use their tow cables against the legs of the imperial walkers, first they must locate and destroy the probe droid sending info to the empire. Similarly, a huge laser stands between the X-Wings and the trench to the port, and can only be destroyed by destroying its shielding. As such, several fly-pasts are needed to blast away the shields and then destroy the gun itself.

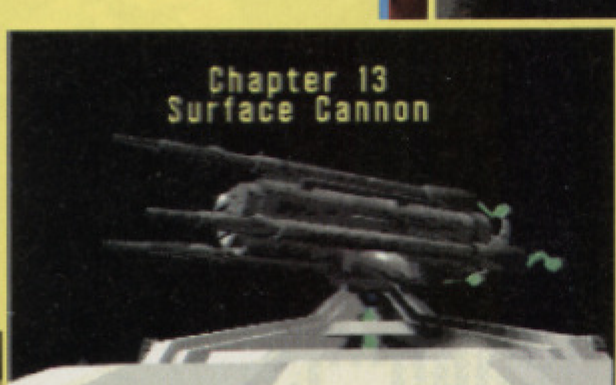
THE FORCE IS STRONG IN THIS ONE

Rebel Assault comes at a time when speculation regarding a new Star Wars film is rife. George Lucas has confirmed he is planning to make the fourth instalment, and rumours indicate that it will be set during the 'Clone Wars' before the events of the trilogy take place. As such, it is believed it will follow the Emperor's route to power, and the younger lives of Obi-Wan and Anakin Skywalker, the latter of which turned to the dark side and became Darth Vader. Other than that, little else is known. Shooting is supposed to start sometime in 1995, but let's just hope that the rumour about Macauley Culkin being in it is a wind-up!

1 PLAYER

RELEASE	TBA
BY	JVC
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	SHOOT 'EM UP

PERCENT COMPLETE





▲ My God! Tony Benn has crossed to the Dark Side. Holy Tory MPs of the 25th century!



▲ One of the fantastic cut screen sequences — this time in Hoth.



Save an astonishing £14,999,960.01 on the world's greatest footballing talent and buy yourself the Ryan Giggs of video games. Start playing this May. See if you've got the skills to be the game's next superstar.

CHAMPIONS
WORLD CLASS SOCCER
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Acclaim

SEGA MEGA DRIVE

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

£39.99 on Sega Mega Drive. £49.99 on Super Nintendo.



1-2 PLAYERS | **16 MEG**

GAME TYPE
ADVENTURE

PRICE £59.99

BY BANDAI

RELEASE IMPORT

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD(6 BUTTON)
CONTINUES: 3
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: MEDIOCRE
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
BEAT 4 FIGHTERS

ORIGIN
Dragonball Z comes from Japan, where it is a successful comic book and toy format.

GAME BREAKDOWN

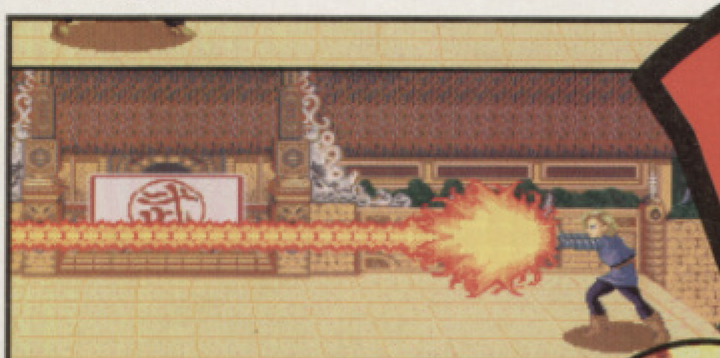


GAME AIM
Defeat opponents in the one-on-one beat 'em up style, by knocking the energy out of them.

DR BA

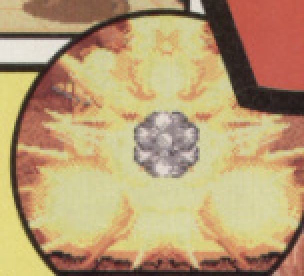
In Japan, comic series of the likes of Dragonball Z are immensely popular with children and adults alike. The volume of material pushed out on sagas like 3*3 eyes and Ranma might seem huge to us, and the lurid-coloured paperback back-to-front format of the editions, stacked in their thousands in Japanese bookshops are far removed from our Dillons and Waterstones with their glossy seasonal novels and hardbacks.

But the Japanese go one step further and turn their literary creations into digital forms. Dragonball Z is just the latest. The exploits of Goku and the Super Saya people of Vegita in their struggle against Friza and his robot cohorts have been distilled into a one-on-one beat 'em up. Before you groan, it's an idea not totally lacking in originality...



FLAMING NORA

Each player has two bars. The top one shows energy level, consistent with most beat 'em ups. The bar underneath signifies the power level of each fighter. This creeps up during a bout, but may be boosted by the players performing a move which envelops them in mental energy. When suitable powered up, fighters can perform immense special moves which rocket across the screen as huge beams of energy, doing massive damage.

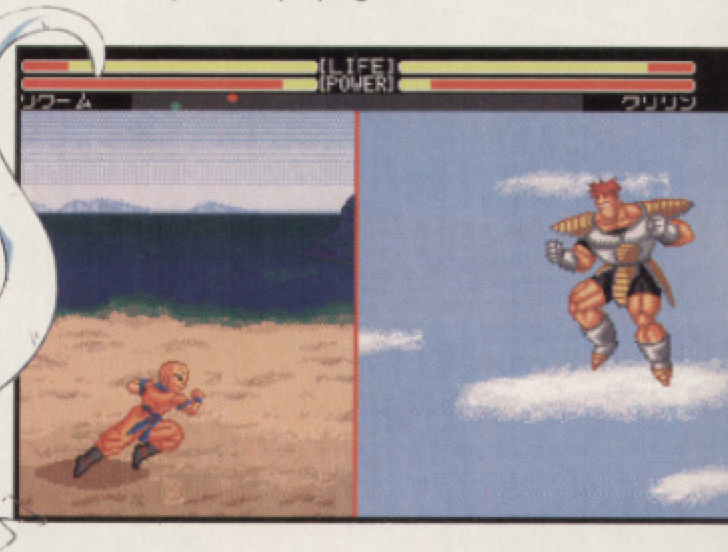






WORLDS APART

The fighting arena in Dragonball Z covers a larger area than other games. Freedom of movement is possible by the screen splitting. As the player's separate, a vertical division appears. Also, when one player takes to the air, using his levitation powers, a horizontal divide splits the playing area.



BALLS THANKS

To George at ICE Distribution (0302 340 079), who supplied us with Dragonball Z is his own inestimable fashion.





MAJOR BALLS UP

The secrets of the squiggles revealed! The essential guide to the characters of Dragonball Z and their foibles:

GOKU



He is a descendant of the Super Saya, a people of secret power. He studied martial arts under Mutenro (the turtle wise man) and joined the greatest ever Martial Arts society. He is the number one warrior amongst the Saya, but wishes to garner even more power.

GOHAN



Also descended of the Saya, he is in fact Goku's son. In the course of his life, his many battles enlightened him in the way of the Super Saya, making him more powerful than his father.

PICCOLO



He hails from Namek, planet of the Dragonballs, and was son of the Evil King Piccolo, the persona of evil in the earthly Gods (spook!). After achieving his deified form, he enhanced his powers by intense training.

VEGITA



A Super Saya, he is extremely powerful, but it has in bred a sense of arrogance and aggression within him. He has some endearing qualities.

TRANX



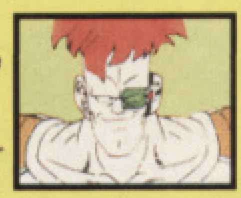
Vegita's son, he has an immense understanding of combat. He despises the robotic legions of Doctor Gero.

KRIRIN



Also a pupil of Mutenro, and a close friend of Goku. His favourite technique is 'Kienzan' our 'round mind cut', when he casts his mental energy into a devastating 'kamehame wave'.

RIKUUM



Member of the Ginew special squad. This ruthless fighter carries on, even when he's down. His mouth-based eraser gun can change the pattern of the stars, such is its power.

GINEW



Chief of the Ginew squad, Friza's trump card. He uses doppleganger power to match the form of his opponent, which he calls 'Kinapoozu'.

FRIZA



The ringleader who brought about the destruction of Vegita, home of the Saya. His ambition is no less than rule of the entire universe, leaving fear in his wake.

ROBOT NO. 18

A new generation robot based on life-like human form. Power is of supreme importance to artificials, so it has an inexhaustible energy source, meaning it never tires.

CELL

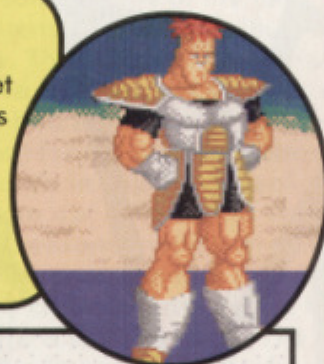
Cell is a biotechnical experiment — creating a fighter out of the cell cultures of martial arts experts.



The final form has acquired immense power.

STRIKE A POSE

Apart from the screen split, Dragonball Z is set apart with its range of moves. Each player has around eight to nine specials, covering all sorts of conventional combat manoeuvres and plenty of 'fantasy' moves. Many of these require fiddling of the joypad, in Streetfighter vein.







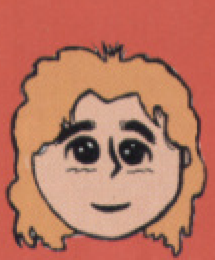
COMMENT



GUS

At first the world 'poxy' springs to mind, but behind a rather shambolic exterior, Dragonball Z is rather fun. Firstly it has a different feel to most one on one beat 'em ups. The larger playing area allows you to draw back and decide tactics before going on for close contact, and many of the special attacks are long range. And there are many special attacks, including the amusingly over the top energy beams. The visuals are a bit jerky, and the character animation isn't state of the art, and yes, the split-screen is sometimes more confusing than helpful, but whether by accident or design, the programmers seem to have got the playability just right. At the price its a luxury, but don't be afraid to indulge.

COMMENT



LUCY

Not being a huge fan of beat 'em ups, it was with reluctance that I agreed to do the comment for Dragon ball Z and, like Gus, my first impression was that my reticence was justified. The graphics are far from stunning, the controls dodgy until you're used to them and it appeared far to slow to be any fun. However, once I got into it, I found it wasn't just another Streetfighter II clone and actually had an enormous depth to it with its plethora of special moves, fighting styles and unusually large playing area. Dragonball Z really does offer a new slant.

IRONY CORNER

It is slightly amusing to find Dragonball Z programmed by Bandai, a Japanese toy company who have always had an association with Nintendo. Indeed, until 1993, Bandai were the licensed distributors for Mario's wares in the UK and would have blanched at the thought of a Megadrive game.



▲ *The main character spends a fortune on Shockwaves gel and Elnette hairspray*

GRAPHICS — 74

▲ The first Megadrive beat 'em up to split the main window.
▼ Some of the sprites and backgrounds look plaintive.

SOUND — 83

▲ Poppy energetic soundtracks which drive the game along. Great sound effects.
▼ Not much variety to be found in the music.

PLAYABILITY — 84

▲ There's a huge range of moves, some of them quite satisfying to perform. A very tactical beat 'em up.
▼ The jerky performance gives it an amateurish feel.

LASTABILITY — 78

▲ Eleven opponents, and various game modes.
▼ Some enemies succumb to 'repetitive move syndrome'.

VFM — 73

▼ the £60 tag is discouraging for a game that, at its heart, is an imitation of many others.

OVERALL — 81

Intriguing, quirky, enjoyable and off-beat. Dragonball Z is for those who like their beat 'em ups unusual (if that is possible).

The Jungle



1 PLAYER

16 MEG

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

PRICE TBA

BY VIRGIN

RELEASE JULY

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: 3
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS:GOOD
GAME DIFFICULTY:
EASY

1ST DAY SCORE
REACH LEVEL 8

ORIGIN
Based on the classic Walt Disney animated feature film.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Guide young Mowgli across the ten platform levels and five bonus sections, collecting gems and finding his chums.

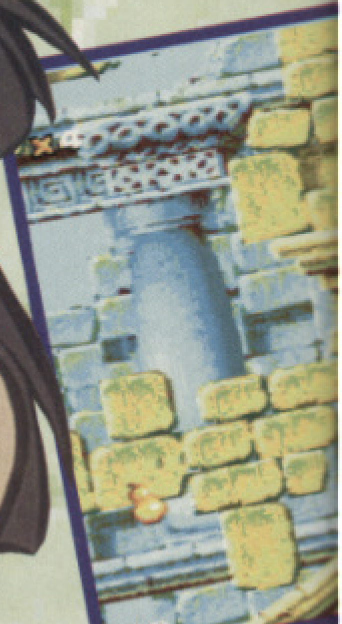
All these city slickers who moan that it's a jungle out there must be blind. Surely they can see that the answer to all there problems is to wear a loin cloth! Look at Tarzan: surrounded by ferocious beasts aplenty, but did they ever touch him? Nope. It's the loin cloth y'see — they were scared to give him any grief or otherwise that flimsy pouch would go flying! The same sort of principle was employed by the Celt army. The thought of thousands of Scots' willies waving in the wind as they ran at you at full speed was enough to freak the bravest warrior out.

This idea certainly worked for Mowgli the man-cub, which brings us nicely to the point of this intro as it's platform action aplenty as Rudyard Kipling's (and later Disney's) classic Jungle Book swings onto the Megadrive.

Having lived in the jungle since infancy, Mowgli is none-to-pleased at the prospect of returning to human society but return he must as Shere Kahn — the man-eating tiger — is back and wants nothing more than to fill his face with tender man-cub.

Mowgli's guardians, Bagheera the panther and Baloo the bear, are along to help the young 'un on his quest over the ten jungley platform levels where bonuses, extra weapons and point boosters are there for the taking while the beasts of the jungle try their best to thwart the man-cub's escape plans.









Book



I WANT TO BE LIKE YOU

Like Cool Spot, Global Gladiators and Aladdin before it, The Jungle Book is an unashamed a platform game. And like most games of this genre there are pick-ups aplenty en route. Here's a run down of some of the more useful ones:



Heart: Boosts Mowgli's energy level.



Mowgli Head: An extra life usually found far out of the man-cub's grasp. Can only be reached by leaping energetically on an obliging snake.



Gems: A certain number of these must be found per level before Mowgli can progress to the boss and ultimately the next level.

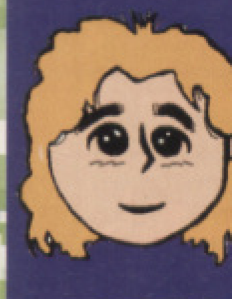








COMMENT



LUCY

Wowee, whoopee-doo and salutations — it's another platform game from Virgin which is not at all like Cool Spot, Global Gladiators or Aladdin. OK, you've caught me out: it is similar. Very similar. But to be fair, I do like this one more than all the others. The graphics are spot on — typically lavish, colourful and Disney-esque with massive sprites and excellently represented characters from the cartoon and the jolly Jungle Book tunes are present and correct. But what about the all-important playability? Well, platformy it may be with the usual leaping from place to place, collecting power-ups and shooting foes, but it is good fun — especially with the bonus levels and hidden areas thrown in for good measure. However, like many before it, this game is much too easy — I reached the eighth level on my first go and although I probably didn't reach all the hidden areas. This doesn't bode well on the lastability front and, sadly, unless you're a Disney freak, it means it just ain't worth the cash..

CARTOON CRONIES

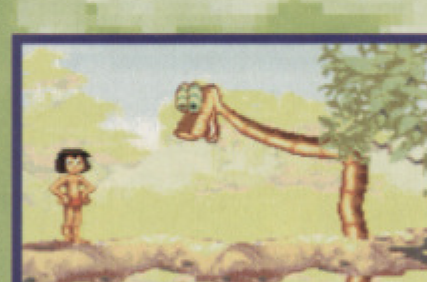
On the first level you get a free ride as far as bosses are concerned — it's just a matter of collecting your gems and finding Bagheera who's basking in the sun. Thereafter, though, it gets a bit more tricky. Here's the gen on a few of the guardians:



King Louie: Another fruit thrower, but a lot more ferocious than Baloo.



Shere Kahn: The final and trickiest boss to tackle which we're not going to give you even a hint on — you'll have to wait and see.



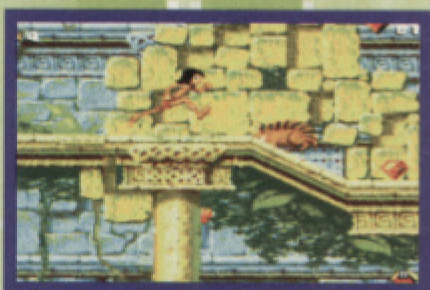
Kaa the Snake: Attacking Mowgli from all angles, this slimy creep shoots hypnotic homing missiles from his eyes which the boy must avoid while shooting Kaa's head for all he's worth.



Baloo the Bear: Mowgli's pal still holds the man-cub up because he thinks it's a real hoot to chuck fruit at him. Mowgli must balance on two rocks in the river, catch the fruit and chucks it back.



▲ Can you stomach this level?



▲ Prickly platform problems.

FRUIT AND NUT CASE

Although Mowgli can waste some of his foes by bouncing on them, he couldn't survive without his weapons. Luckily, there are a number of power-ups at his disposal. He starts with a limitless supply of bananas to throw but these can be exchanged for:





Nuts: Slightly more powerful than the standard shot..

Mask: Makes Mowgli temporarily invincible whenever he chooses. Handy for tackling bosses.



Double Bananas: Another nice one for taking on bosses.



Boomerang: Surrounds the man cub with fast-moving boomerangs — great when confronting lots of baddies at once.

COMMENT



GUS

A few weeks ago Virgin's Aladdin was given 'Game of the Show' at the ECTS in London. I thought it was a ridiculous decision, judged entirely on appearance alone. Jungle Book has been conceived out of the same mould, and may receive the same fatuous accolades. In fact, Jungle Book is nothing more than a re-styling of a concept which was a re-styling of Cool Spot which was a restyling...There's no doubting this game's beauty. A phenomenal amount of work has gone into tiny details like flies, Mowgli's animation, pastel-shaded backgrounds, and falling leaves. But in gameplay terms it's appallingly regressive. How can a game be playtested properly when you traverse three-quarters of its levels within a day? It's an attractive, seductive game, but with a lethal lack of lastability. Virgin are innovative developers, and have produced many breakthough games (Dune II comes to mind), and will no doubt write many more but, sadly, Jungle Book is not among them.



BONUS NECESSITIES

Hidden throughout the game are five bonus levels which can only be accessed when Mowgli discovers a secret spade. He then finds himself in a cave where masses of power-up icons are lying, just gagging to be picked up.



GRAPHICS — 91

▲Spot on. Beautiful backgrounds and huge, detailed sprites which are all faithful representations of the Disney characters.

SOUND — 84

▲All the old favourites from the feature film are in here.
▼The effects are a bit naff, though.

PLAYABILITY — 88

▲Really easy to get into with lots of places to explore.
▼But it's the same old thing with nothing new to offer.

LASTABILITY — 66

▲The bonus levels take some finding.
▼The ten levels can be zipped through far too quickly and once completed there's nothing to bring you back.

VFM — 68

▼A game which will take you only a couple of days at the most to complete just isn't worth the cash demanded nowadays for Megadrive carts.

OVERALL — 75

This game's rather like a Ming vase — beautiful to look at, but empty, too easily cracked and not worth the money.

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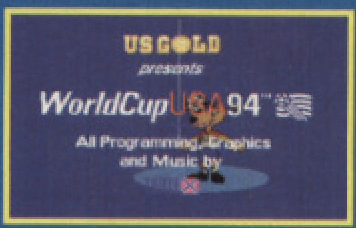
Favorite Clubs..

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MM July/94

World Cup



1-2 PLAYERS

16 MEG

GAME TYPE
SPORT

PRICE £44.99

BY US GOLD

RELEASE JUNE

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: N\A
SKILL LEVELS: TEAM DEPENDENT
RESPONSIVENESS: AWFUL
GAME DIFFICULTY: HARD

1ST DAY SCORE
WON WORLD CUP

ORIGIN
Football teams all over the world meet up every four years for the World Cup. US Gold have recreated the tournament.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Lead your chosen team to victory having beaten virtually every Footballing nation known to man. Do this, and a nice gold trophy is yours.

It has been 28 bloody years since England have won the World Cup. In fact, the last time an English player held the trophy it was in its original Jules Rimet shape, which has since retired to Brazil's cup cabinet because they won it three times.

What's worse, we won't get another crack at it until 1998, because Graham Taylor couldn't select a team capable of demolishing the part-time fruit-pickers (or whatever) of San Marino. Still, even ol' 'Turnip' and Laurie McMenenenenemy can have another go at lifting the trophy, as US Gold's official licence runs on field. It boasts more tactics and options than any other of its kind, and allows the player to customise the game in virtually every department — including the addition of England to the squads available. If only it was that easy in real life...

DO I NOT LIKE THAT PASS...

World Cup '94 exists on two levels: either as a straight kickaround or a tactician's dream. Whereas continued play of some footy games often reveal an unbeatable way to score every time, US Gold have tried to counter this by allowing the player to tinker with their team formation before and during a match. For example, having found your side's defence exposed by long passes, a quick trip to the tactics menu allows the player to drag a player icon to counter such an attack. Lo and behold, the next time the attackers try the same move, they'll find a defender waiting for them!





Cup USA 94

AS YOU LIKE IT

If there's one thing World Cup '94 has in bucketloads, it's options. In addition to the usual one/two-player games, weather conditions, and the like, the game's many options also allow the player to determine everything from how well the ball sticks to the players' feet, the colour of the kit, and even the names of the teams — what's more, the made-up players in the game can also be replaced with the real thing. Blimey.



▲ *Our forces shall march to footballing victory!*

COMMENT



STEVE

World Cup '94 is the Burger King of footy games. You want to alter the way the ball sticks to a player's foot? You got it. You want to select an upfront formation to outflank the opposition on the wing? You got it. Sadly, however, there is very little meat behind all these options. I've spent a lot of time playing World Cup but at the end of the day, the actual footy section just can't cut it. It has momentary glimpses of genius, including the best passing action of ANY soccer game, but the action is a little too pedestrian. Similarly, it's breath-takingly easy to beat the opposition with the usual tactics nearly always resulting in a goal. To be fair to US G, they have tried to counter this by adding a series of tactics screens which can be accessed during the game, but this only serves to interrupt the flow of a match and, to be honest, I doubt if many people could be bothered. World Cup '94 is a slick-looking footy game, but is completely outplayed by the likes of Sensi and FIFA.



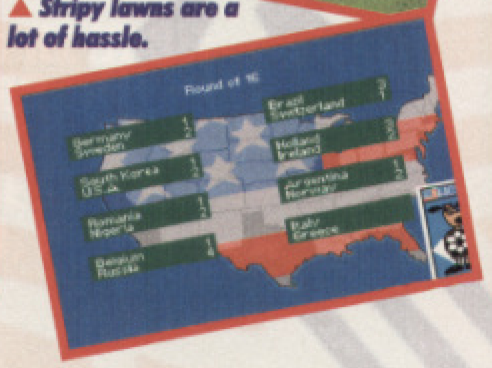
▲ *Find the sniper, now!*







▲ *Stripy lawns are a lot of hassle.*



COMMENT



GUS

I think Steve has been more than fair in his assessment. Maybe a little too fair. World Cup hides behind its menus, its icons and its options. But we are living in the age of FIFA, and this little lot has been found out! The in-game presentation is pathetic. Minuscule sprites, minimal animation and zeroid atmosphere. Where's the tumult when you score a goal — it's meant to be the world's greatest soccer tournament, for heaven's sake! Someone wake the crowd. Every time someone tackles, the game stops for a split-second. Now just take a look at these players. They exhibit about as much intelligence as the real England squad (and I'm not doing 'ver lads' down, as I'm from Scotland, thankvermuch). Take a free kick and any nearby player is likely to run in the opposite direction from the ball. Thankfully (or not, you may think) the CPU teams are about as useful as a bag of spanners. With a four-player, isometric, animated extravaganza of an alternative from EA, how could you even consider?

GRAPHICS — 79

▲The presentation is faultless, and the in-game sprites are small but behave and look realistic enough.

SOUND — 61

▼Far from impressive. The music is blander than a Worlds Apart CD, the crowd is apathetic to say the least and the effects are similarly dull.

PLAYABILITY — 70

▲The footy section is easy to pick up, and tackling and passing soon become second nature.
▼Scoring seems to follow a

LASTABILITY — 66

▲The game can be changed in every way, so an infinite number of tournaments are yours.
▼This doesn't disguise the slow pace of the all-important match sections.

VFM — 67

▲There's a lot in it for your money...
▼... But it just isn't addictive enough to stand up to long periods of play.

OVERALL — 67

A tactician's delight, World Cup '94 is the Cameroon of footy games: it tries hard but ultimately can't cut the mustard.

PLAYERS	1-2
MEG	4
PRICE	TBA
BY	CODEMASTERS
RELEASE	JULY
GAME TYPE	ADVENTURE

The word classic is bandied about rather too often, but if one game can live up to the moniker it's Archer Maclean's C64 and Atari 400 blaster, Dropzone. Now it has been updated for the 90s with a scenario which goes on about Ionian crystals and the like. However, at the end of the day, Dropzone is still a Defender clone with the player saving scientists whilst blasting aliens out to kidnap them.

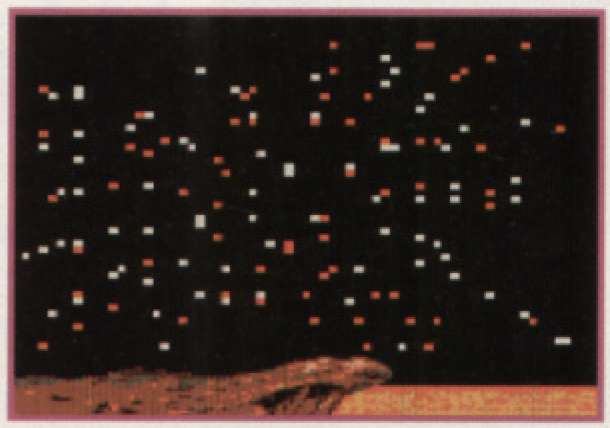
As such, forget complex scenarios and fancy crystals. Dropzone boils down to cluster of small sprites being hoisted away by larger green ones. As a jet-packed spaceman, blast the green guys and drop blue ones into a nearby haven. Repeat until your three lives are gone. And don't forget your smart bombs. It's as easy as a Sainsbury's recipe...

MEGA GAME

GRAPHICS 66	The same planet repeated, and tiny and uninteresting sprites.
SOUND 45	The usual blasting effects and explosions.
PLAYABILITY 92	Superb. No holds barred blasting action.
LASTABILITY 87	The alien patterns get busier and they put up a really tough fight.
VFM 90	One of the best blasters the Game Gear is ever likely to see.
OVERALL 90	A welcome and very close conversion of the C64 classic. The best blaster available for the 'Gear.

ARCHER MACLEAN'S DROPZONE





Things tend to fall apart quite frequently.

COMMENT



STEVE

I've played every version of Dropzone there is, and for me it's a game that never dates. Forget special moves and huge bosses, Dropzone is just a fast-moving shoot 'em up set across the same bland planet — but there's something about it which proves immensely playable.It doesn't take long for the aliens to start speeding up, and Codemasters have managed to faithfully recreate the C64 game's brilliant control system, resulting in a stunning conversion. I have to admit that I'm not a fan of the new fat sprite, but for sheer seat of the pants addiction, Dropzone can't be beat. Perfect Game Gear fodder.

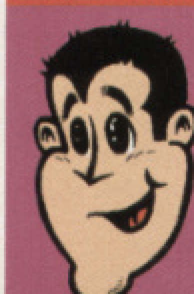




ENEMY MINE

Game Gear Dropzone features all the monsters made famous in Archer Maclean's original. In addition to the customary green baddies, there are red mutants which chase the player around the screen; lightning clouds which unleash deadly bolts of electricity; and seemingly innocuous balls which, when shot, release a pack of worms which are very hard to hit.

COMMENT



GUS

Never has a game more suited to its format. Dropzone is what Game Gears are made for:instant, addictive gratification. Really, there's no distant goals, no complex interface to learn — just pick it up and play instinctively. Also, think yourself lucky. Fifteen years ago you required a few hundred pounds and three hundredweight of cabinet to enjoy a game of Defender. Now the miracle of modern technology and Codemasters (many say they are one and the same) brings it into the palm of your hand. Probably the most fun you can have with five fingers.



1 PLAYER | **16 MEG**

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

PRICE	TBA
BY	US GOLD
RELEASE	JUNE

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: NONE
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: OKAY
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
45,000

ORIGIN
The Hulk was the second Marvel comic creation of Stan Lee, after The Fantastic Four.

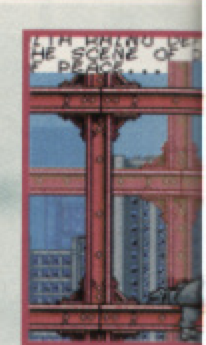
GAME BREAKDOWN


GAME AIM
Defeat each of Hulk's five foes, who await him at the end of platform levels.

Hulk is somewhat different from the average super-hero. Icons like Superman, Spiderman, and the X-men share common characteristics which make them super-beings: handsome, seemingly impregnable, inspiring. By contrast, the Hulk has always inspired pity. He's a freak; a Jekyll and Hyde mistake. He possesses power, but it cannot be controlled.

You might expect the most poignant character in the comic canon to be approached with care when a video game goes into production. After all, it's not all storming and superpowers with the Hulk. Which is perhaps why US Gold have taken so long to produce their licensed game. So, just what have they done?





THE INC HUL







COMMENT



STEVE

This has so little in common with Marvel's green-skinned anti-hero it defies belief. Since when did the Hulk require several hits to smash something? And why did Banner need special pods to become the Hulk? And why should he want to since he was always searching for a cure? Granted, we could let such laxity to character detail go by if the game was any cop, but this is yet another dull platformer with crap beat 'em up bits thrown in for good measure. This is no better than Data East's Dragon Ninja coin-op released four years back, and in this day and age this is unforgivable. The Hulk has been in development for over a year now — surely something a little better than this should have emerged. If I was Marvel I'd be well ticked off...

CHANGELING
In the Hulk stories, the transformation to the Hulk occurs when scientist Bruce Banner is enraged. In the game you spend most of your time in the green-skinned role, helpfully allowing you to beat up the robotic legions standing in your way. You only become Banner again when your energy level falls to a certain amount, and death nearly always follows a few seconds later. Becoming the Hulk again depends on collecting the necessary transformation pods.













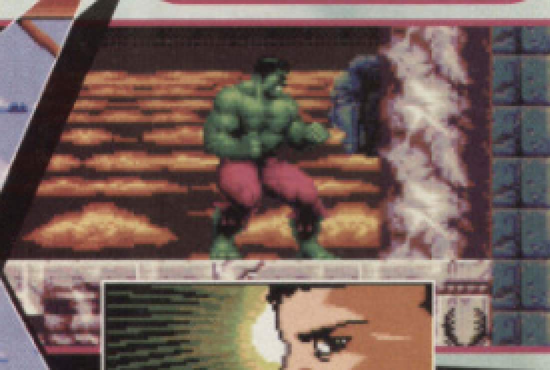
COMMENT



GUS

Another chilling episode. Not for the Hulk, but for video gaming. This has been in the hands of developers, Probe, for over a year and a half. They even received advice from a senior figure in game journalism (his anonymity is respected here), but the end result is a complete non-event. All the rage, action and brute power the Hulk represents has been lost in this pathetic, production-line platform beat 'em up. It's not even a good example of the genre. Just like Virgin's Superman debacle, console programmers have an unerring ability to make superheroes into super dorks. Excitement? My heart barely skipped a beat.





SHRINK TO FIT

Being Bruce Banner has one advantage. You can fit into some narrow pipes and passages, often leading to bonus rooms. Hulk also has to use his head later on, as progress is linked to secret doors and switches.



BRAWN INDEPENDENT

Hulk uses a small selection of combat moves: headbutts, throws and punches. Previously, one strike from the big green monster was enough to silence most opposition, but these robots can withstand anything up to three hits.





GRAPHICS 80

▲The Hulk sprite is magnificently drawn: very green.
▼But not quite big enough. The backgrounds are bland.

SOUND 88

▲Excellent swing-beat style soundtrack, just like the cartoon would feature.
▼Very standard FX.

PLAYABILITY 70

▲ A modicum of gratification, short-term.
▼ There's no real sense of either achievement or purpose.

LASTABILITY 59

▲ It will be difficult to tromp through all five stages with one credit.
▼ Hulk's main problem is that it's very forgettable.

VFM 68

▼There are more ingenious platform games for the price. Just read the comics.

OVERALL 66

The epithet 'missed opportunity' is a cliche, but just so applicable in Hulk's case.

DRA
THE BRUC



1-3 PLAYERS | **16 MEG**

GAME TYPE
BEAT 'EM UP

PRICE TBA

BY VIRGIN

RELEASE JULY

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: 3
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: SLUGGISH
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY

1ST DAY SCORE
REACH SAMURAI

ORIGIN
Bruce Lee is probably the single-most famous martial arts expert of all time. Dragon is based on the film of his life.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
As Bruce, your one task in life is to smash seven shades out of anyone you meet. If that's true of his life, I'm glad I never met him..

It seems to us that Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story, was a very flowery interpretation of the actor's life. Granted, he was indeed the greatest martial artist in cinema history, but some of the stuff he got up to in that film? Like scrapping seven or eight cleaver-swinging chefs at once? Hmmmm.

Still, if the film was a true representation of his life, Virgin have every right to breathe a sigh of relief. If Hollywood is to be believed, Bruce made his way through life via a series of superb fights which start with him taking on a load of American sailors, doing the same to the aforementioned chefs, and eventually making his mark in films like 'The Big Boss' by... er, fighting more people. Virgin have recreated these in the 11 stage beat 'em up that is Dragon, setting each battle within a scrolling play area. Mind you, I hope they've skipped over the soppy lovey-dovey bits and the bit where Bruce breaks his back, as they were really dull. And the latter wouldn't allow for any special moves...



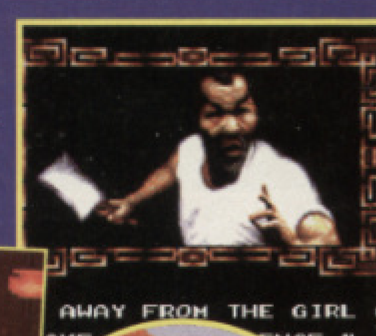


▲ *Fanny Craddock gets a kick to the beard!*

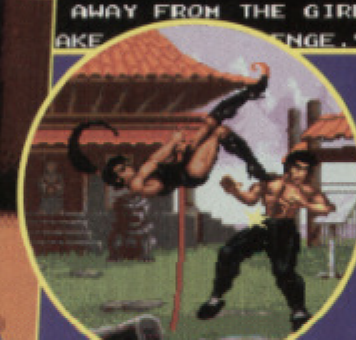


ENTER THE (LITTLE) DRAGON

Dragon picks out key fights scenes from the film, starting with his fight against a chain-wielding sailor, and moving on to a fight against a cook armed with a meat cleaver. Digitised pictures lifted from the film set the scene for the forthcoming fight scenes and keep the player posted of Bruce's life. Similarly, the game follows Bruce's entry into the world of films, most notably a two-stage fight on the set of 'The Big Boss.' Other aspects have been taken from the film and cleverly used in the game, too, including three mirrors Bruce's dad gave him which are used to symbolise his remaining lives, and a series of sub-games which test his speed and agility and were used to gauge his increasing prowess on the big screen.









BRUCE LEE 2

In addition to the one-player mode, a second player can join in for a bit of a scrap, too. Virgin's developers had originally hoped to use, Bruce's wife, Linda Lee, as the secondary player, but this never came off, so a second Bruce sprite has been used instead, albeit in a different coloured pair of strides. This second fighter does has the disadvantage of removing the second chef who appears in the kitchen, though.

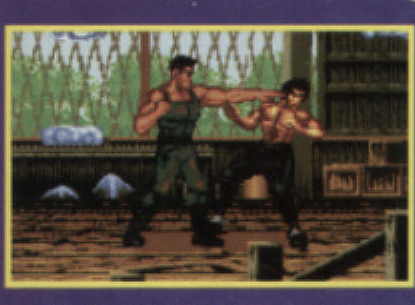


GON

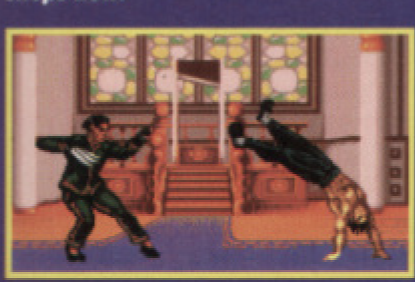
E LEE STORY







▲ *Military muscle men — in your shops now.*





▲ *These devices are not on sale to kids.*

CHI FOR TWO

As with most beat 'em ups, Bruce's energy is shown as a bar at the top of the screen. Directly below this, though, is a secondary bar which denotes the power of Bruce's 'Chi' — mystical power. By moving to the left-hand side of the screen and pressing the Start button in conjunction with the pad, Bruce's move configurations are altered slightly, adding such special moves as somersaults and speed kicks to his inventory.

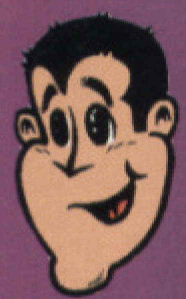
COMMENT



STEVE

Dragon is the perfect game for a beat 'em up licence. In the film, Jason Scott-Lee takes on up to eight people at a time, the characters come ready-made as cleaver-wielding chefs, and cinematic enemies attack Bruce as he goes through life. From the early version I saw, Dragon seemed like it was going to live up to the film's promise, but the final game is let down by some hideous game flaws. For example, during the heat of a fight, Bruce is often stunned and there's no way of bringing him around, thus allowing the opposition to claim even more of his energy. In addition, the assorted moves are a little slow to pull off and this makes the levels even more frustrating. Dragon could have been such a good game. It looks good with its massive sprites and clever moves, but fundamental mistakes leave Dragon in the 'missed opportunity' category

COMMENT



GUS

I'm not a Bruce Lee fan, and I haven't seen Dragon, but I know a good beat 'em up when I see one...and this isn't an example. Dragon falls prey to the kind of gameplay flaws that imperil every beat 'em up. First, as Steve mentioned, the 'powerless while stunned' syndrome. This trick is used when an opponent is too easy to beat, so the programmer takes the control of the character away from the player. Secondly 'repetitive move syndrome', in this case Bruce's flying kick. I'm also unhappy with the lack of moves — even taking the two other Chi modes into account — hardly matches up to Eternal Champions 60 odd moves, or its choice of eight characters, for that matter. Dragon's an attempt to give a new gloss to combat games, but the mechanics just aren't there.







SAMURAI SHOWDOWN

In the film, at key turning points in his life, Bruce's dreams are haunted by a towering Samurai demon. Bruce finds himself in a smoke-filled graveyard with the spectral warrior bearing down on him for a fight to the death — one Bruce eventually loses. The game uses the Samurai as its final boss, but whenever Bruce's three lives are lost, a timed fight against the warrior allows the player to continue. Providing they beat him, that is...



▲ *I wield the spade of doom.*





GRAPHICS
90

▲ Large sprites, and superbly-detailed backdrops. Instantly recognisable from their filmic counterparts.

SOUND
84

▲ Varied music and all the usual biffs, punches and groans.
▼ The effects aren't exactly all they could be.

PLAYABILITY
76

▲ Beat 'em ups are always fun to get to grips with.
▼ But Dragon's sluggish controls and unfair gameplay faults prevent full enjoyment

LASTABILITY
76

▲ Plenty of opponents, and the final boss is tough.
▼ Irritating faults ruin what could have been an excellent licence.

VFM
78

▼ At 16MEG, this game just doesn't have enough playability to warrant a buy.

OVERALL
77

The perfect beat 'em up licence is wasted in a game which is just a like a Bruce Lee film: impressive to look at but no real content.

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DR...

THE BRUC...



1 PLAYER

4 MEG

GAME TYPE
BEAT 'EM UP

PRICE TBA

BY VIRGIN

RELEASE TBA

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: NO CHANCE
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: ADEQUATE
GAME DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE

1ST DAY SCORE
BEAT SECOND BOSS

ORIGIN
A platformer based on the eventful life of Bruce Lee, as seen in the biopic, Dragon.

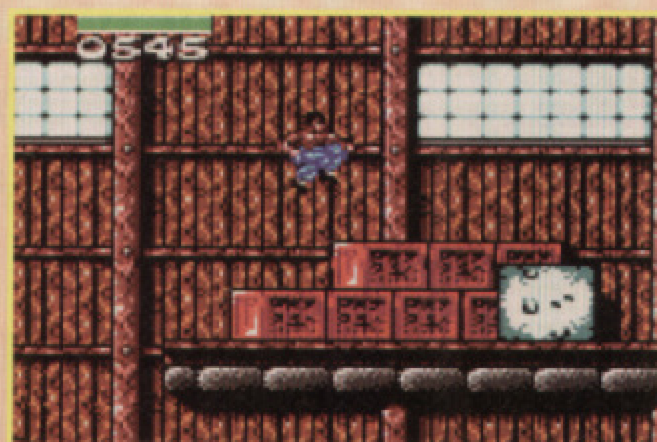
GAME BREAKDOWN



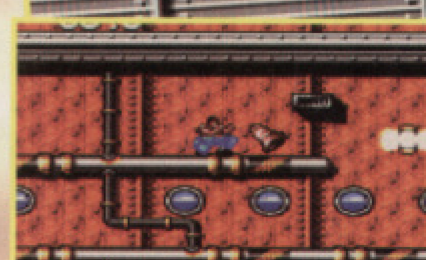
GAME AIM
Explore platform stages collecting bonuses and kicking the crap out of the game's many assailants.

As a child, Bruce Lee was known as the 'Little Dragon', which proves quite prophetic for this handheld recreation of the events of his life. Charting his progress from petty crook to martial arts expert and movie star, Dragon is a scrolling platformer reminiscent of US Gold's C64 licence of way back.

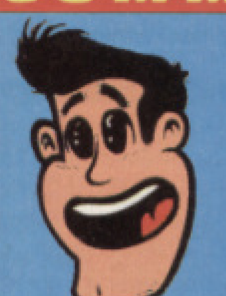
Starting on the boat from Hong Kong to America, the action contains both fight scenes and object collection, with the former coming into play via a series of kicks and punches, and the latter used to replenish any lost energy or add a few extra points to Bruce's score. This mixture is then repeated as the player guides Bruce to movie stardom and into countless scrapes.







COMMENT

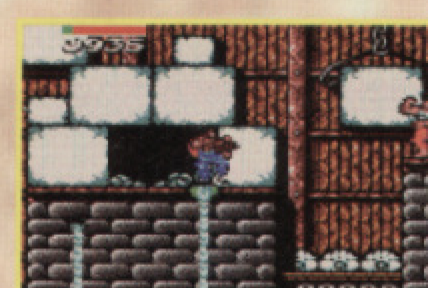


STEVE

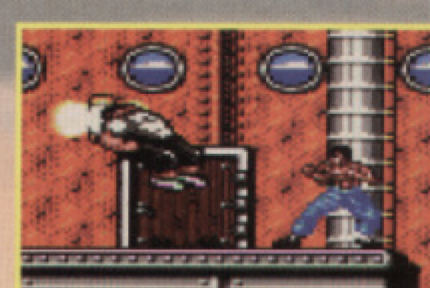
Whilst Game Gear Dragon may not look much, it does play rather well — if only for a while. The fighting action is limited to a handful of moves (with one despatching virtually everyone with minimum effort), but the platform part of the game throws up some really smart ideas. Handheld Dragon was never going to win any awards for its similarity to the movie, but the game has more than enough neat ideas inspired by the film's fight scenes. People jump out of ice blocks, and band saws are a real danger, and these ideas gel together to create a playable, but never taxing, game. Game Gear fans are a bit tight for good stuff right now, and whilst Dragon isn't the exact solution to the drought, it's a worthwhile filler.

IT'S THE STORY OF MY LIFE...

Unlike the Megadrive game, Game Gear Dragon's levels are loosely based on large parts of Lee's life as opposed to specific fight sequences. As such, the first level sees a young Bruce fighting his way across the steamer taking him from Hong Kong back to his native America, whilst later on the game jumps forward a few years to the set of 'The Big Boss.' Each stage is made up of three smaller levels, with a larger fighter acting as a level 'Boss.'



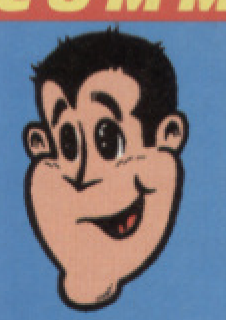
▲ *The ice factory is trickier than a Walls' tangle twister..*



GON

CE LEE STORY

COMMENT



GUS

The fact this is totally unconnected with the Megadrive Dragon is a good thing. The closeness is bears to Virgin's own Robocop vs Terminator is not so good. Like RVT, it's nippy, slick and reasonably playable. The graphics ain't too bad as well. But in common with too many Virgin games of the mo it's a bit too easy. Play it only on hard, and even then another notch on the challenge ratchet would have been nice. All in all, it's rather well suited to the Game Gear: pick up Bruce and give him a spin as and when you feel like it

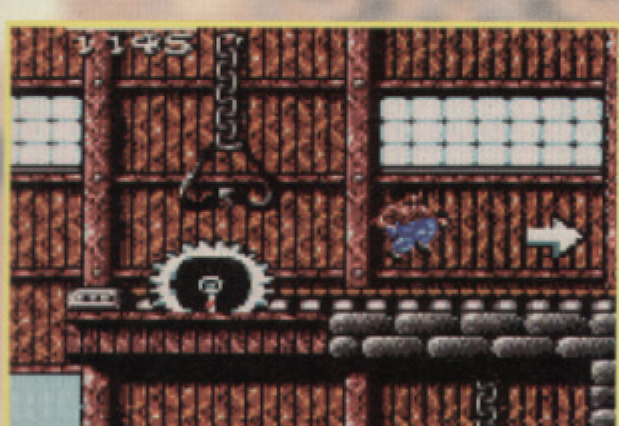
BEHIND YOOOOOU!

As befits a mprtials arts legend, Dragon presents Bruce with more hazards than the likes of Van-Damme and Seagal could ever cope with. Band saws, spiked pits and an assortment of chain and weapon-toting fighters and ninjas. Bruce's energy is displayed as an energy bar to the top-left of the screen, and is whittled away whenever he concedes a punch or lands on something sharp.









ON MASTER SYSTEM, TOO

The Master System version of Dragon is identical in content to that of the Game Gear. In terms of levels, the two games are exactly the same, but for some reason the Master System version seems to run a little slower. It also suffers from the 'Exploding Fist' syndrome of the handheld game where every foe can be felled with a sly leg-sweep. As such we're going to award it...
76%

GRAPHICS 74

▲ A nice variety of small sprites.
▼ The backdrops don't change a great deal.

SOUND 71

▲ Nice introductory tune, and more than adequate sound effects.

PLAYABILITY 85

▲ The simplistic gameplay means it's a doddle to pick up.
▲ New hazards are constantly added throughout the game.

LASTABILITY 73

▲ Some of the bosses are tough, and the addition of more and more hazards make it a toughie.
▼ The levels are a little similar, and this hardly inspires progress.

VFM 80

▲ Not an accurate licence, but a playable game for a reasonable price and that's what counts.

OVERALL 80

Simplistic but playable stuff. By no means a classic, but one of the most original Game Gear platformers for quite a while.

STAR TREK THE NEXT GENERATION

1 PLAYER	16 MEG

GAME TYPE
ARCADE ADVENTURE

PRICE	£59.99
BY	SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE
RELEASE	IMPORT

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: BATTERY SAVE
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: ADEQUATE
GAME DIFFICULTY: HARD

1ST DAY SCORE
N/A

ORIGIN
The game is licensed from the characters and elements of the TNG television series, created by Gene Roddenberry.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Save the Galaxy from destruction at the hands of the FDI. Perform the duties of a Starfleet craft.

STA
THE NEX

This century, the twenty fifth, will be the one for exploration, for explanation; for reconciling the paradoxes of the known galaxies; for discovering that which is unknown.

Starfleet is committed to this endeavour through its pan-galactic armada. We are not the 'Space Police'. On the contrary, the maintenance of the Prime Directive, forbidding unecessary interference in other cultures, is our strongest aim. We seek to bring understanding, conciliation and security to those within the Federation.

Nevertheless, our envoys, like the Galaxy Class Enterprise under the command of Capt. Picard, are ever vigilant for threats to this security. Only a quarter of this Galaxy is known to us, and the influence of mankind is limited even in this narrow sphere. But we are ready.





CONFLAGRATIONS

Weapons are the last-ditch option when encountering craft. You are normally given a chance to negotiate with interlopers like Romulans entering the forbidden zone. If you do fight, the battle takes place on a 2-D grid, with the state of the Enterprise shown on the right-hand side.

COMMENT



GUS

Spectrum Holobyte have made an admirable job of creating an original game concept out of the material provided. The Next Generation provides a wealth of background, and the detail contained in the ship's computer is just one illustration of how it has made its way into the game. The presentation is also adequate, even if the graphics are not cutting-edge Megadrive stuff. It also gives the impression of a being a massive game. The downside is that it's frequently long-winded. The away team segments, especially the mining one, involve a lot of back-tracking and fruitless searching. Space battles are also in quite short supply. All this prevents this being a great game, but it's certainly a good one.



▲ *The Enterprise enters a nebulous area of space.*

AR TREK
XT GENERATION



TERRA INCOGNITO

The secondary section of the game is set on planetary surfaces. The Enterprise transporter may send 'away teams' of four persons to investigate planets. These take the form of overhead scrolling levels, with a fair amount of shooting and a strong puzzle element. Selecting members for the team is done in the Transporter room, from a personnel grid. It's worth getting a good mix of Ensigns (military personnel), a Commander, and a trained medical practitioner. In the TV series, Riker always leads away team.







▲ *Even in the 23rd century, the side-parting rules*



UNIVERSE IN PERIL

The TNG series has covered so much territory in its seven season run, that any game couldn't hope to fit it all in. Spectrum Holobyte have opted to take a single storyline and turn it into a game. The Enterprise crew come across a disabled alien vessel. By aiding the unknown hulk, they learn of a device called the FDI which threatens the Federation. Eliminating the threat is the ultimate objective.



HOP, SKIP, JUMP

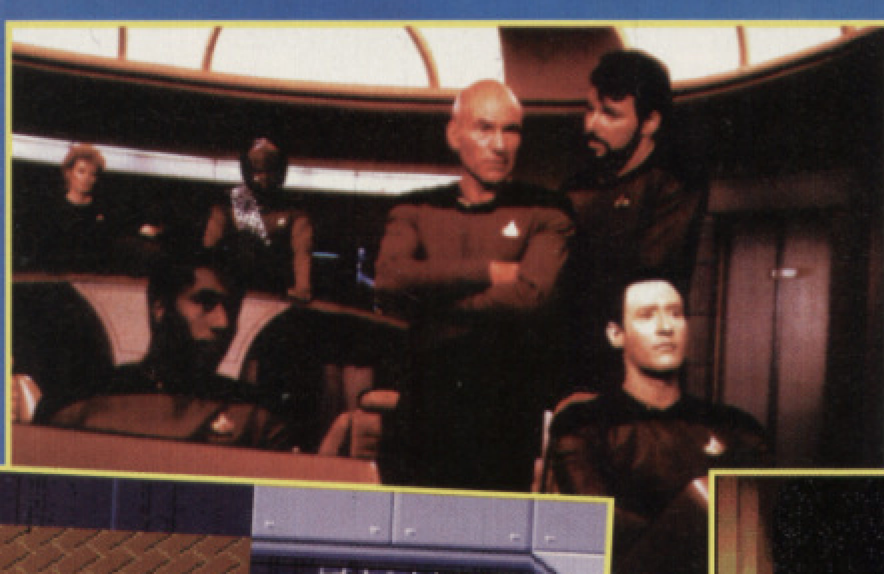
Movement between planets is effected by Impulse and Warp power. The navigation panel splits the galaxy into systems and satellites in a series of sub-menus. You need to note the directions of Starfleet and subspace messages to keep you on the right track (if not, Picard's log can normally assist).

CIRCUITRY

Your task will be easier if you get to know the ship's less obvious functions. Sensors provides extra information about anything on the main viewer. The ship's computer has a wealth of (authentic) information on the Enterprise. It's easy enough to scroll around the bridge to access these stations.









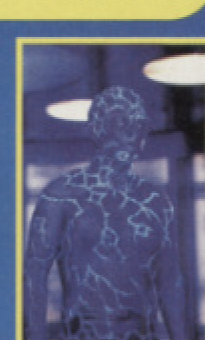
COMMENT



STEVE

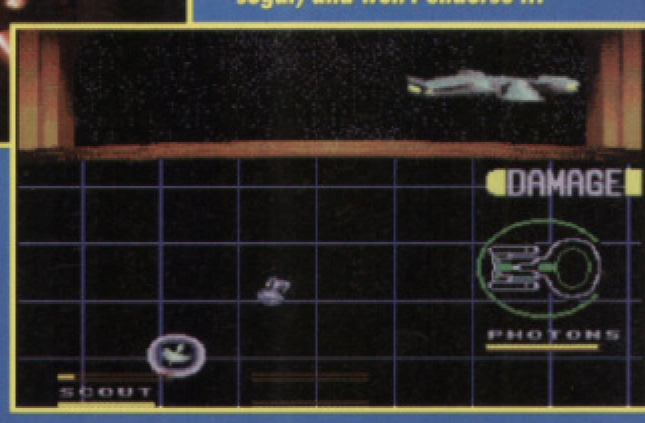
TNG's developers are to be congratulated for managing to incorporate so many of the TV show's ingredients within the game. However, somewhere along the line, the action has suffered as a result. TNG fans will no doubt poop their pants over the many programme references, and this will be enough to entice them into the actual missions. But more casual fans may not be able to put up with the often repetitive gameplay. Exploring planets is a little tedious at times, and even the space battles aren't all they could be. That said, TNG is an entertaining mix of game styles which is essential for fans of the series, and worthy of a look from anyone fancying something a tad different.







▲ Actor fact: this guy doesn't like sugar, and won't endorse it!



GRAPHICS 74

▲ The scrolling bridge section is nifty.
▼ Even if the characters are all static. The game's colour scheme is quite dowdy.

SOUND 67

▲ Loads of samples from the show have been used: transporters, tricorders and more.
▼ The tunes are horrible renditions of the TV music.

PLAYABILITY 75

▲ Great depth to be had, and the game doesn't spoon feed you.
▼ It's slow to get into, and there's less action than you might expect.

LASTABILITY 80

▲ It's going to take a while to crack this baby.

VFM 77

▼ The cart is overpriced, but that's due to a full 16MEG of memory.

OVERALL 79

Full marks in the ingenuity stakes, and not a bad little effort for the role-playing minded amongst us.



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1 PLAYER

GAME TYPE
SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE	£49.99
BY	SEGA
RELEASE	MAY

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: PASSWORD
SKILL LEVELS: 2
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
COMPLETE MISSION 2

ORIGIN
Developed as an original Interactive Movie, Tomcat Alley's scenario is very Top Gun in flavour.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Down all the designated targets and return alive from each mission.

tomcat

It's so incredibly risky, you shouldn't even consider it. You'll be out on a limb, no one to protect you, and it could live with you for the rest of your life. Many have tried — but few have come back with even a vestige of honour and dignity.

Okay, so you INSIST on being an actor in a Mega-CD interactive movie. Don't say I didn't warn you. Here's one...Tomcat Alley. It's like that Tom Cruise movie, er, Top Gun. They were even going to get Kelly McGillis, but she's doing panto. Listen big mouth, you can forget your Stanislavski — You basically take to the skies and blow the crap out of anything with wings. But it's a serious movie, you know? It raises issues. Pity no one will appreciate it as art.



▲ *The cost of this plane could feed a 3rd world nation!*

COMMENT



STEVE

It's hard not to be impressed by Tomcat's brilliant FMV scenes, and some of the action scenes rival those of Top Gun. However, as is becoming the norm with these 'movies on CD', it's only a matter of time before the links become repetitious and it comes down to the gameplay to save the day. This time, though, things are a little different — Tomcat Alley is quite an addictive blast. Granted, there's not a massive amount of interaction on the player's part, but the atmosphere generated by the conversations between your wingmen add a sense of urgency to the missions. Similarly, although most of the blasting is just a matter of putting a crosshair on a target, this is never as easy as it sounds and adds to the challenge. This still isn't the perfect CD game, but it's a lot closer than Sega have got before...

FLY BY WIRE

Lucky Tomcat pilots use an advanced HUD (Heads Up Display) that oversees all the functions normally associated with joysticks and flip switches. The icons on the HUD are ranged in columns on either side of the display.

SMALL MISSILES
These are the standard sidewinders armed for missions. Your plane carries up to 15.

LARGE MISSILES
More powerful, these missiles are retained for larger targets. They take longer to 'lock-on'.

AIR/GROUND
This control toggles between air and ground targeting.

RADIO
Occasionally you need to respond to a message from base or your wing-men using this control.

CAMERA
Activate recording on reconnaissance missions with this icon.

EVASIVE
Your Tomcat comes fitted with electronic anti-missile technology. It's activated from here. You are limited to nine 'evasives' per mission.



t alley

LIVING SOAP

To make you feel you're flying with real buddies, and not just dummies in uniform, the 'goodies' have personalities. These are developed in the video sequences between missions. Your navigator, Dakota, has the serious hots for the hotshot female of the squadron, Ratchet. Watch his pathetic attempts at getting a date. There's also a bullish commander, who looks like Father Dowling.





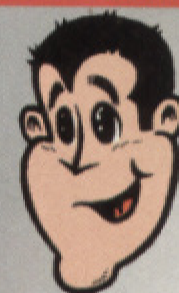
◄ *It's not quite Charlie's Angels, Bosley. But that's no bad thing...*



TRIGGER HAPPY

The game is a mixture of reflexes and non-interactive film. First select a 'waypoint' from the HUD, then one of the enemies to chase. You'll see a plane in front, which you try and 'lock-on' to with your crosshair. Split-second timing is needed to successfully shoot down a Mig. Miss and they might have a chance to shoot you.

COMMENT



GUS

Interactive movie time again, but this one's more like interactive MTV. The film cutting is slick and fast, with brilliant use of the Mega-CD's access. Also, the Cinepak FMV shows another gradual improvement in quality. With the standard limitations of the format, it's not hugely interactive, more a reflexes game. I would have been happier if you had a chance to select various evasion routes rather than be presented with a limited number of avoids. However, it's an original concept, executed well and once more inferior CD hardware comes up with something better than the tawdry CD-i can manage.

SNAFU

Missions vary from taking out bombers to getting pictures. Later missions lead on from their predecessors. One involves taking out a bridge you already photographed. It's sometimes necessary to fly a rescue mission if your wing team is brought down



▲ *This is a bang.*



GRAPHICS

92

▲Best Cinepak FMV ever? We like to think so. Fast cutting of scenes and convincing Special FX.

SOUND

91

▲ In the air, the confusion of battle is simulated by great FX.
▼ The music is appalling 'Rocky Movie' style stuff. CD quality is sometimes poor

PLAYABILITY

76

▲Fast and rather furious to begin with, it strikes you as interactive Top Gun.
▼Limited and slightly repetitive gameplay over the succeeding levels.

LASTABILITY

69

▲By mission four the 'window' of tolerance is very narrow. Much practice will be needed.
▼ The active elements of the game are limited..

VFM

77

▲ A full CD of video of a reasonably high quality.
▼ Showpiece games like this are more of a games-player's luxury.h

OVERALL

75

The Mega-CD surprises once more with a technically impressive showpiece. But the qualms about lasting value remain.

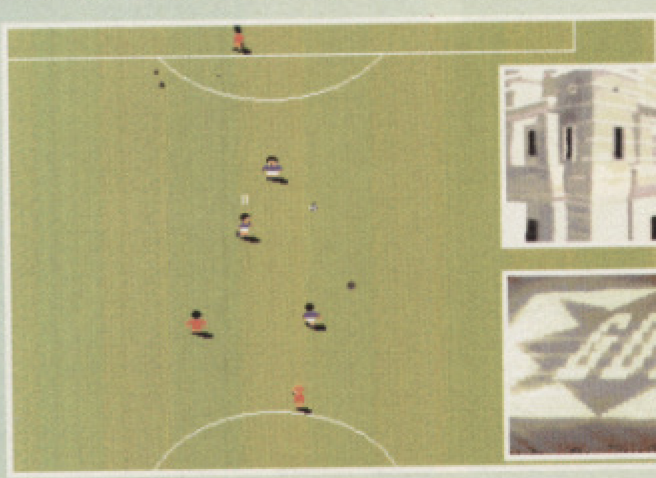
1-2 PLAYERS	
PRICE	£39.99
BY	SONY IMAGESOFT
RELEASE	JULY
GAME TYPE	SPORT

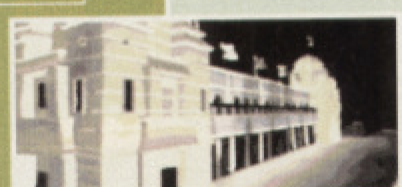
Sensible Soccer

The pursuit of footballing excellence continues with Sensible Soccer CD. The Megadrive cart was a No.1 hit for Sony, amidst an otherwise patchy year. It was also a truly deserving success, against the chilling backdrop of releases like Péle Soccer (will we ever let Accolade live that down?).

As Take That sagely put it in their song, "everything changes but you". At first glance Sensi CD would appear to a copy worthy of the Sensible Canon. Do deeper benefits lie beneath ownership of the shiny disc version, or is this just the second round replay?









COMMENT



STEVE

When I first played this, I scored and nothing happened. Then, after what seemed an eternity, the crowd started roaring! There's only a second delay between the action and FX, but it's rather odd when the crowd go 'ooh' when nothing is happening! Aside from that, this is just as playable as the cart.

PLUS ÇA CHANGER...

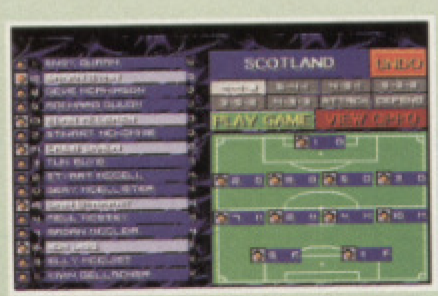
Most of the game options and controls are preserved, and differences in play are barely detectable. Sensible is still a fast-moving, high-scoring easy-to-play game, attracting the same admirers and its occasional detractors.

MERCY CHANT

Sound is one of the main areas of change to the CD version. Using the CD as an audio access source, games are accompanied with the life-like noise of the terraces (Tranmere Rovers, actch). Chants, songs, and individual voices may be picked out, and climactic moments find a response from the 'crowd'. The only snag lies with the disc access. The slight delay means the crowd response lags behind a goal. Not a big point, but it adds a surreal edge to the game.





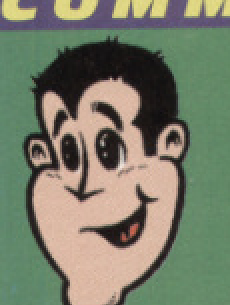


▲ *Scotland, Scotland, on ye march!*

ARENA

A presentational addition is the stadium fly past, performed just before each match. There are several stadia, depending on whether a local, national or international match is being played. Then the players get to walk along the tunnel to the pitch. Sadly, the effects are over in seconds.

COMMENT



GUS

This is Sensible, all right. I wasn't expecting much change from a perusal of the pre-view game, and the end product proves me right. However, no tears, since Sensible Soccer is a great soccer game and no harm has come to it. Most of the gripes mentioned in the cart review have not been tackled, notably a lack of experimentation with the graphics. No one with the original should even consider this, of course, but those who missed it might.

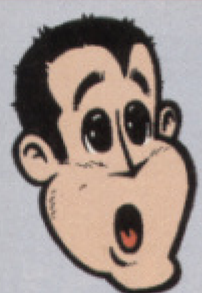
GRAPHICS	63	No major graphical improvements in this CD update.
SOUND	83	The CD crowd noise is authentic but has a disappointing delay.
PLAYABILITY	90	Still the most instantly playable football game.
LASTABILITY	88	Sensible reveals itself to have surprising long term appeal.
VFM	86	Not a great deal more for a little bit less. A fair deal.
OVERALL	90	Still the second greatest football game. Still a firm favourite. Still Sensible.

ECCO THE DOLPHIN

1 PLAYER	4 MEG
PRICE	TBA
BY	SEGA
RELEASE	JUNE
GAME TYPE	EXPLORATION

MEGA GAME

COMMENT



GUS

This delightful conversion is even more appealing in that it adds a game style to the Master System's large catalogue that it didn't previously have. There's no other 8bit equivalent for Ecco in terms of depth, detail and enjoyment. The dolphin handles beautifully, and the newly designed level layout starts to test the player much more immediately. This looks much like the Game Gear version, but I felt that the screen area was just too small to play satisfactorily on the hand-held. On the other hand, this is sub-aquatic bliss.

The Japanese love dolphins. Especially with chips. But the worldwide success of Ecco the Dolphin on Megadrive signals that they suspended the advice of their palates for an even yummier gaming experience. At MEAN MACHINES we were Similarly impressed with Novotrade's first game, lavishing abundant praise and a 96% rating. Wisely, Sega have chosen Novotrade to pilot the Master System through the treacherous waters of conversion. The spirit and essence of Ecco is retained in the basic gameplay, but the layout and sequence of levels has been changed. Saving the world from space aliens is still the hidden premise, though.

SENSURROUND

Ecco communicates using sonar beams directed at other sea mammals (not fish — he just eats them). The Sonar beam also triggers puzzle switches and, together with the swim button, becomes a weapon. Arguably its most useful function is providing a circular map of the surrounding cavern.





▲The legendary lost city of Atlantis crops up as the plot starts to twist.





▼This wall of Nautili constitute an early problem.

FEEL

Ecco's gameplay garnered praise for its originality. It's a combination of puzzle solving and learning to control the dolphin's fine controls. The Master System Ecco is just as flexible as the original: twists, leaps and somersaults are all possible.

GLYPHTERS



Progress in Ecco is controlled by Glyphs, mysterious crystalline prisms which block the underwater caverns. 'Key Glyphs' provide a hidden signal that empowers Ecco to remove other locked prisms. A few glyphs provide essential information when Ecco 'talks' to them.

COMMENT



STEVE

Master System owners have had a bit of a rough time of it recently, but this conversion of Ecco should more than make up. Ecco is a massive game full of depth and fresh ideas, and in addition to all this it's completey original — including the layout of the caverns! Master System owners fed up with their current collections, should get it now.

GRAPHICS 90
▲A great dolphin sprite, especially with Ecco's range of movement.

SOUND 81
▲Some great dolphin songs and sound FX.

PLAYABILITY 92
▲Immediately taxing, for minds as well as fingers.

LASTABILITY 90
▲A large game with many engaging surprises.

VFM 92
▲One of the best produced products of the year. It's a buyer's market.

OVERALL 92
In it's way, just as stunning on the the Master System as it was on the Megadrive. A sweet song of the sea.

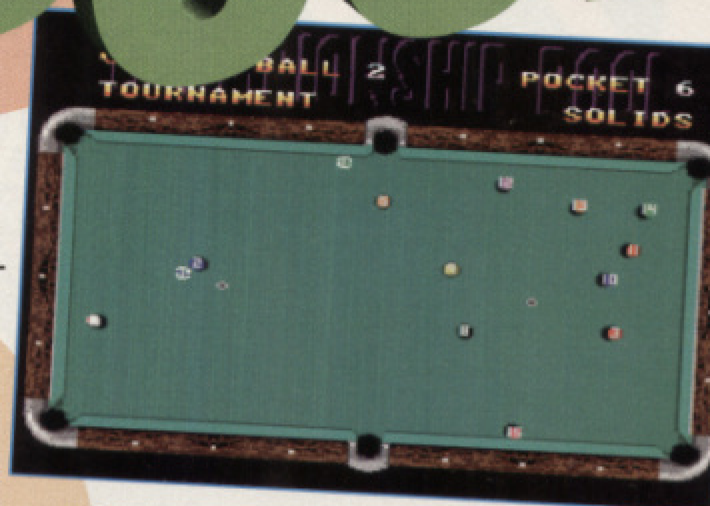
CHAMPIONSHIP POOL

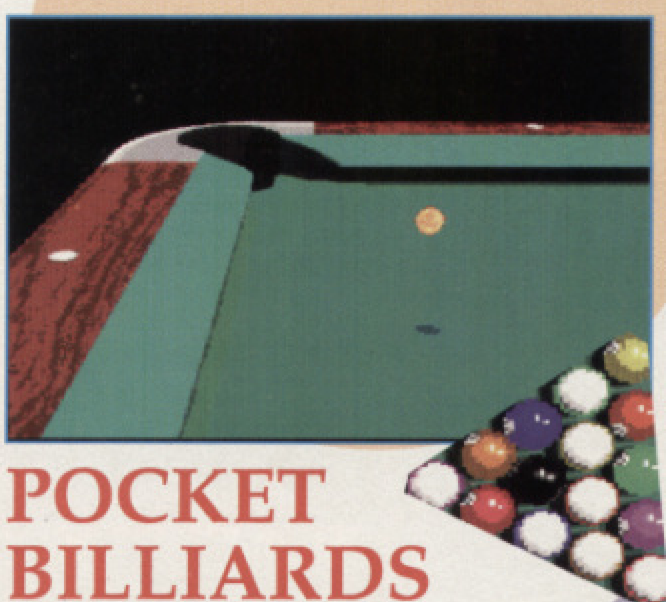
1-8 PLAYERS | **4 MEG**

PRICE	£40
BY	MINDSCAPE
RELEASE	IMPORT
GAME TYPE	SPORT

Pool has always been associated with bad living. Once termed 'a misspent youth' (a criticism now usually reserved for video games), pool evokes visions of smoky rooms, grimy pint glasses and large pot-bellied bikers wearing Metallica T-shirts. A rather accurate description actually, but what would you rather have? Spotty Stevo Hendry and the paunchy middle-aged Snooker nerds? Nay thanks!

If you are too scared to get mum's new trainers scuffed by entering an iniquitous den of a Pool room, then I suppose this is the safe



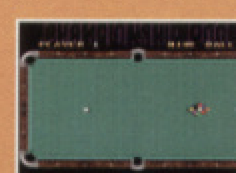


POCKET BILLIARDS

Pool comes in many forms. The most common is called 'Eight Ball'. Played with fifteen balls, players choose to pot either solids (numbers 1-7), or stripes (9-15). Whoever pots their quota first gets to sink the black to win.

EYE BALL

The game is viewed from three different positions, for pin-point accuracy. When you line up a shot, the projected path is shown by the 'pro-aim'. The aimer makes the game somewhat easier than you might imagine.



OVERHEAD
To see the whole table setting.



CLOSE UP
The area around the cue ball and target. The close-up can scroll across the table.



ANGLED
An isometric view of the layout which may aid positioning. The view can be rotated.

GRAPHICS	**51**	Drab. Simple balls and beize, and uninspiring presentation screens.
SOUND	**56**	Horrendous tunes, just like the grating 'Side Pocket' music.
PLAYABILITY	**56**	The pro-aimer seems to take away the skill, and the point.
LASTABILITY	**50**	The options extend game life. But it isn't an attention holder.
VFM	**44**	A bad idea, when you consider the price of a real Pool game.
OVERALL	**51**	Pool for the most desperate of social inadequates.

COMMENT



GUS

There is nothing spectacular about this conversion at all. To make Pool work on a console, needs a more radical approach than is shown here. In the end, Championship Pool gives you near total control of all factors, except those in the game itself. Variations, replays, spin are all catered for, but the actual gameplay is not that satisfying. I'd really advise anyone who likes Pool to get out to a real club and play it. £40 buys a lot of games.

COMMENT



STEVE

Whilst Championship Pool features realistic ball movement and plenty of options, playing it on a Megadrive was never going to be as good fun as the real thing. Mindscape have tried to incorporate loads of different games styles to counter this, but at the end of the day it still results in a rather tedious cart. If you want to play PBool, stick with the real thing. Like fruit machines, you're never going to get a decent Megadrive adaptation.

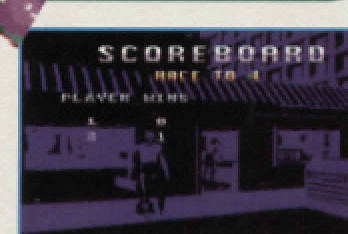
SINK THE PINK

This game has more variations than the average Haydn sonata. Each is a subtle twisting of the rules. Some use less balls, others feature a time limit, and others require you to name the ball before you pot it. There's also a 'party' option for up to eight players, or a Tournament set over US cities.









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THE FUTU STARTS H

Not since the first rumblings of a 16-bit console emerged from Sega's Japanese offices has there been such excitement in the video game market. Whilst eagerly-awaited games come and go, new developments on the technology front cause much more of a stir. The Saturn rumour mill began nearly two years ago with stories circulating of a 32/64bit system boasting a CD drive and capable of producing games even better than those of any arcade. During this time reports have stated that it would/wouldn't be Megadrive compatible, it would/wouldn't be 64bit, and Sonic/Mortal Kombat/Virtua Racing would be the first game for it.

It was at last January's CES that the dreams became a reality, as the first pics of the 32bit Saturn and concrete details were unveiled — along with the first games for it: Virtua Fighters, Virtua Soccer, a nameless platformer and a shoot 'em up. And — gasp! — Daytona Racing. And then came the Mega-32: an add-on for your Megadrive which offers semi-Saturn compatibility.

The Mega-32 plugs into the top of a Megadrive rather like the 8bit Power Base, and Sega aim to have it in the shops in November for a meagre £150. The machine is compatible with both the Megadrive and Mega-CD, and Sega claim the new unit's processing power will give CD users the VHS-quality FMV they have craved.

Everybody is eagerly awaiting the 32bit stuff, ourselves included, and most of the major software houses and developers are readying themselves to jump on the 32-bit wagon. Psygnosis, Acclaim, Virgin, and Core (amongst others) are busy planning for the future, so we spoke to those in the know about their plans for the Mega-32 and also take a closer look at three of the biggest games set to coincide with the unit's release.

DAYTONA RACING



If there's one game everyone wants to be able to play at home, it's Sega's Daytona Racing coin-op. Never before has there been a game so graphically detailed yet so playable, and Sega's Mega-32 conversion is even faster than the arcade game! The Daytona coin-op differs from the likes of Virtua and past road racers in that it is the most realistic-looking game yet. As the cars whizz around the assorted circuits, light reflects off their surfaces and the graphical detail is so intricate it's possible to see the tread on the tyres! Similarly, the cliffs, trees and rocks which make up the backdrops are equally detailed, creating a movie-like feel to the action.

The Mega-32 conversion contains all the coin-op's impressive features, and is currently 60% complete. All the racing graphics have been completed, and Sega's Japanese coders are now busy ensuring the game logic is correct — including the original's spectacular crashes — whilst adding a series of options screens and generally tidying the game up. Sega are aiming to have Daytona Racing ready for the Mega-32's launch in November, and if the conversion gets any better it looks like we'll be having very merry Christmases one and all...





▲ The other racers show a level of intelligence unknown previously.



▲ High resolution ensures immense detail.



RE
ERE

The future starts here. After much rumbling and speculation, at last Sega are ready to unveil the first games for their new 32bit machines. With the Mega-32 add-on due out in November, and the Saturn sometime in 1995, MEAN MACHINES went behind the scenes on the first titles for both and found out who's working no what for the systems...





ROAD TO NOWHERE

In terms of gameplay, Daytona runs along similar lines to Virtua and countless other racers you could mention. Initially, the player competes against thirty other cars in a race against the clock. The basic aim is to pass one of several checkpoints within the allotted time and also try to ensure you're within the first three past the post. In all, there are three courses, and the number of computer-controlled racers competing are reduced until just the elite remain.

LIGHTS ALIVE

If you've got any PC or Amiga-owning mates, you may already have heard of light sourcing and Gouraud shading. Basically, these are what combine to create the assorted effects which add so much realism to Daytona's sprites and backdrops. Light sourcing basically gives a point from which light strikes each sprite, and the Mega-32's powerful processors then adjust this so the car's shading is altered whenever it turns — just like sun reflecting off any moving object. Gouraud shading is a complex algorithmic process that makes smooth blends out of shading tones, letting colours merge instead of being placed starkly against each other.



▲ ***Gouraud shaded road; texture-mapped rocks.***

WHO'S DEVELOPING, THEN?

At the time of writing, UK development teams are as of yet to receive their Saturn/Mega-32 development kits. However, Sega have already sent out a book of specifications on the machine's sprite handling, palette and processing power, and from these a number of teams have put together a series of sketches for proposed games. As we understand it, Acclaim and Virgin's US developers are the only teams with 32bit kit, and they are in the process of putting together Duel — see last month's news for more details — and Hoopz respectively for the system. Sega, on the other hand have a slight advantage in terms of time, and Virtua Fighters, Virtua Soccer, Daytona and Virtua Racing Deluxe should all be ready in time for the machine's launch — along with another 25 home-grown titles and, according to Sega, 30 third-party games.

THE REST...

ACCLAIM

Duel: A small demo exists in which a humanoid character uses whatever objects come to hand in a fight to the death. Acclaim used real actors linked up to movement analysis computers to ensure the animation was as realistic as possible. Acclaim are also using Sega's 32bit system as an entry point as a coin-op manufacturer.

Batman Forever: A new licence (of the third Batman film no less) and one for the 32bit systems late next year.

Acclaim's American division have put together a rather smart Alien demo, but whether this will eventually evolve into something else isn't known.

ARGONAUT

Creature Shock: A few PC shots of this have appeared elsewhere, but Argonaut are awaiting their kit so the Sega conversion can begin. A morphing alien is attacking a space station, and as part of a tough marine core you've got to sort it out. Creature Shock resembles a 3D Operation Wolf-style blast from what we've seen of the PC version, but we're told there's a lot more to it.

CORE DESIGN

A few sketches have been put together for an as-yet-nameless 3D blast.

IMAGINEER

Kick Off 3: Well, it's set to appear on every other format known to man, so why not the

VIRTUA FIGHTER

Street Fighter II brought one-on-one beat 'em ups bang up to date by adding a series of increasingly intelligent opponents, special moves galore and the kind of playability the likes of Yie Ar Kung-Fu and Kung-Fu Master would have killed for. But where does the beat 'em up go from here? Easy, into the third dimension...

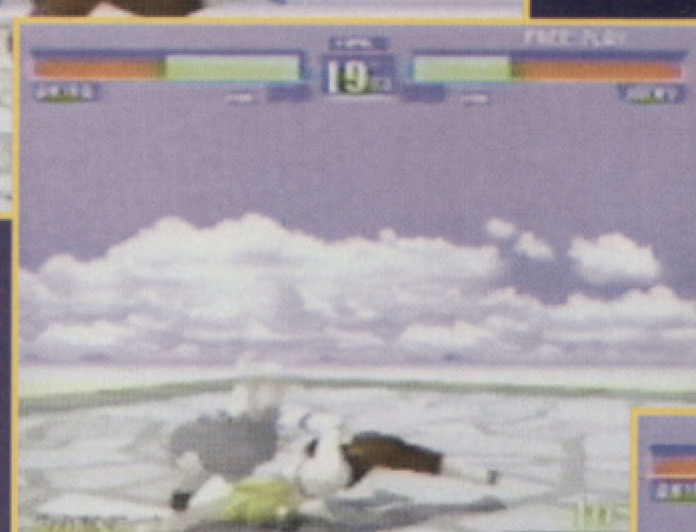
Although the basic aim of Virtua Fighter is the same as that of any other beat 'em up you have ever played (best of three timed rounds, etc, you know the sort of thing), it's the polygon fighters which have to be seen to be believed. As the screen pans around each bout, the fighters behave more realistically than their sprite-based rivals could ever hope. Over 1500 polygons go into each fighters, and these are then light-shaded and coloured to create images which resemble surreal cartoons.

The Mega-32 version of Virtua Fighter is identical to that of the coin-op, and Sega are also rather proud that the home version runs even faster than the arcade game! We're all massive Virtua Fighter fans here at MEAN MACHINES and, as such, can't wait to get to grips with this version. As soon as we've seen it, so will you...





▲ *Jacky performs a bone-crunching throw*

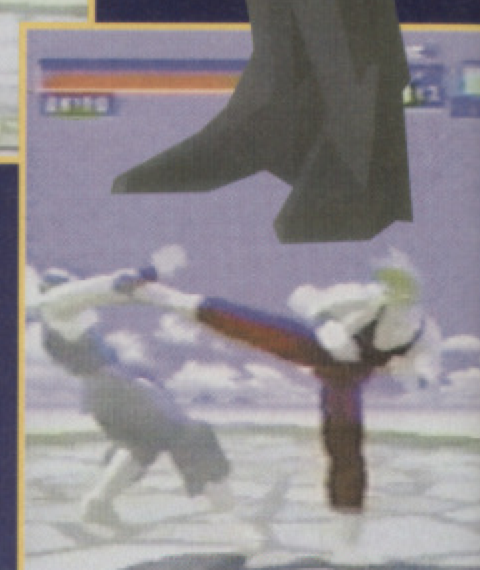


WHAT'S TODAY'S SPECIAL?

There are eight Virtua Fighters in all, each with an individual style and a series of special moves. Including good all-rounders such as Akira and Jacky, but more specialist fighters including Jeffry — who's particularly adept at throwing people — and Lau, who has a neat line in leaping on fallen opponents' stomachs!

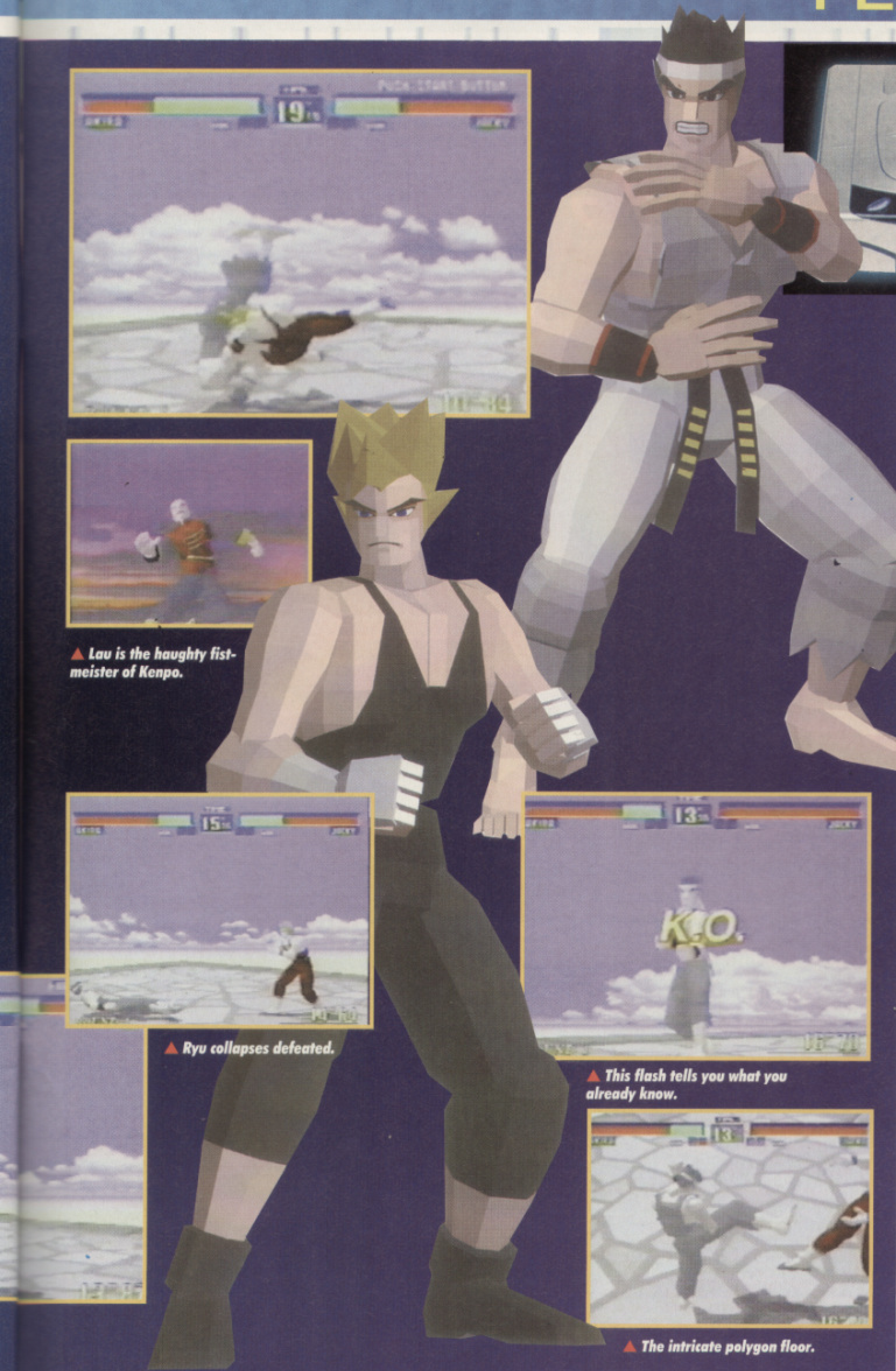
LET'S SEE THAT AGAIN

One aspect which has been improved for the Mega-32 version is the 'Action Replay' mode. Although a panning camera keeps tabs on the action mid-fight creating a movie-like atmosphere to the game, after each game a series of new viewpoints are given during the action replay — including an extremely impressive behind-the-head view of the proceedings. Just watch those kicks hit home!



▲ *When blows connect, they really feel like they connect.*





▲ Lau is the haughty fist-meister of Kenpo.

▲ Ryu collapses defeated.

▲ This flash tells you what you already know.

▲ The intricate polygon floor.

Saturn! Imagineer have yet to start KO3's 32bit development, but they aim to have it in the shops at the time of the machine's release.

KONAMI

Apparently the Japanese development division have taken delivery of the first kits, but news of what they're up to has yet to be revealed.

PROBE

Croydon-based Probe are currently working on the preliminary design of ten games for the machine. Disclosure agreements mean they can't reveal exactly what, but secondary rumours indicate that Acclaim's **Judge Dredd** and **Alien Trilogy** licences make up two of them. So far, the programmers have put together six months' worth of preparatory work, and Probe were expecting their development machine by the start of June.

PSYGNOSIS

Scavenger 4: Exists in an early PC CD version as a series of static images, but actual gameplay has yet to be designed. Psygnosis are as committed to Sega's 32bit machines as they are to the PC CD format and, as such, any

games announced for the later will eventually be converted.

SEGA

Daytona Racing: See main Preview.
Virtua Fighters: See main Preview.
Virtua Soccer: Imagine FIFA viewed from an assortment of Match of The Day angles, with the screen cutting to give the optimum view of the action. Voila! Virtua Soccer...
Knight Game (title to change): A stunning-looking platformer starring a clockwork knight making his way through a puzzle-filled world of toys. As the knight stumbles across objects, the view changes to give a better look at what they are. Stunning...
Dragon Flight (title to change): The best example of the 32bit machine's screen update capabilities yet. The player guides a dragon and its rider to and fro across a fractal landscape, shooting the oncoming enemy sprites — the dragon can be viewed from a number of angles and the detail makes PC flight sims look like a Spectrum game.

VIRGIN

Hoopz: Virgin's first 32bit title is a Basketball sim. Apparently, the US HQ has a complete office given over to its development, and the game will feature massive sprites and a series of games viewable from a succession of viewpoints.
Creature Shock: See Argonaut.
Virtual RPG: Expect the title to change, but it seems this will be the first RPG for the system.

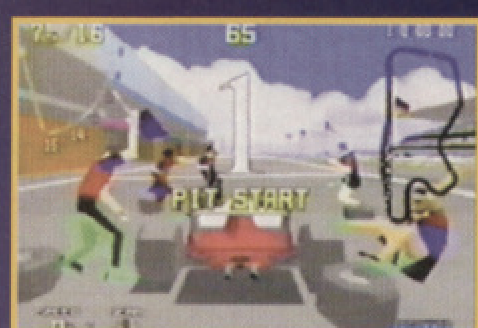
VIRTUA RACING DELUXE



▼ *That tunnel, Bay Bridge. Know it well.*



So, you've bought your copy of Virtua Racing for the Megadrive and have been suitably impressed by the its playability and fast vectors have you? Well, cop a load of these screenshots, and prepare yourselves for Virtua Racing Deluxe.
With the Mega-32 using the same hardware as the Virtua coin-op, Deluxe is a carbon copy of the spectacular Sega arcade game, with the three tracks recreated in every detail. Virtua Racing Deluxe isn't just a conversion: it IS the arcade game. The coin-op quite literally will be brought into your homes, but we at MEAN MACHINES reckon it's thunder will probably be stolen by Daytona. Even so, this is going to be one hell of a conversion...



▲ *One second to the start of mayhem.*



▲ *The cockpit view is going to blow you away.*



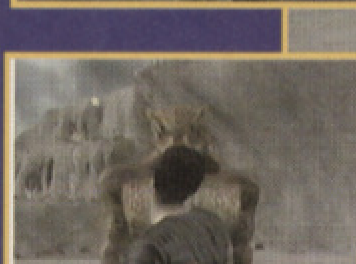
SO WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE THE SATURN?

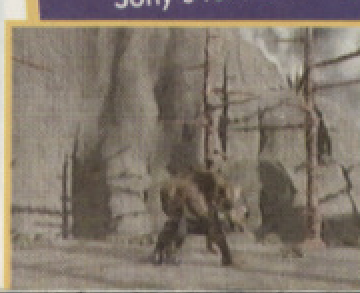
With the Mega-32 set to plug into our Megadrives later this year, you may be asking how the Saturn still fits into Sega's plans. Quite simply, the Saturn isn't likely to be aimed simply at games. At the time of writing, very little had been decided. A price for the machine has yet to be set, as have the precise specifications, and even the mock-up we showed you a few months back wasn't the final version — in fact, Sega haven't decided if the unit will have a cartridge slot yet! According to rumour, Sega are currently looking at how the Saturn will measure up against Sony's forthcoming PS-X system, and this in turn will determine the entry level they decide for their machine. Whatever they decide to do, though, we'll let you know.

▼ *Tale as old as time, song as old as rhyme...*









▲ *D'you look at my pint?*



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- Closing date for entries 30th June 1994
- Winners will be notified by post
- No Purchase necessary
- Judges decision is final
- No correspondence will be entered into
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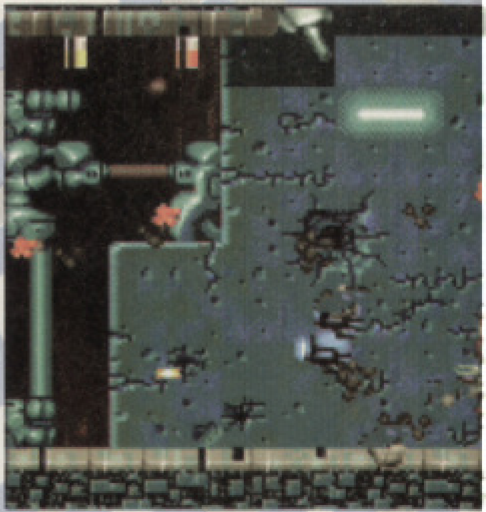
RELEASE	TBA
BY	PSYGNOSIS
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	SHOOT 'EM UP

1 PLAYERS

16 MEG

PERCENT COMPLETE

Fancy a bit of Swedish hardcore? Just before you reach for the pen, Mrs Shelley, relax. Hardcore is a very above-board project from Swedish coders, Illusions, to be published later this year by Psygnosis. As part of the recent revival in side-scrolling platform shooters (Probotector, Mega Turrican) it's probably the timeliest (and tastiest) titbit that the Psyggies have lined up.

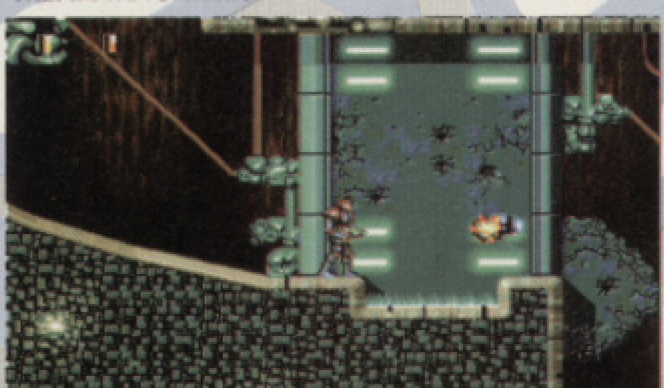


HAR

Hardcore is still in mid-development, so a plot line hasn't been firmed yet. However, due to the ultra-violent manner of the gameplay and the story screens already inserted, it should cover an alien invasion line, with you playing the crack commando out to free one of the Earth's colonised satellites from oppression.

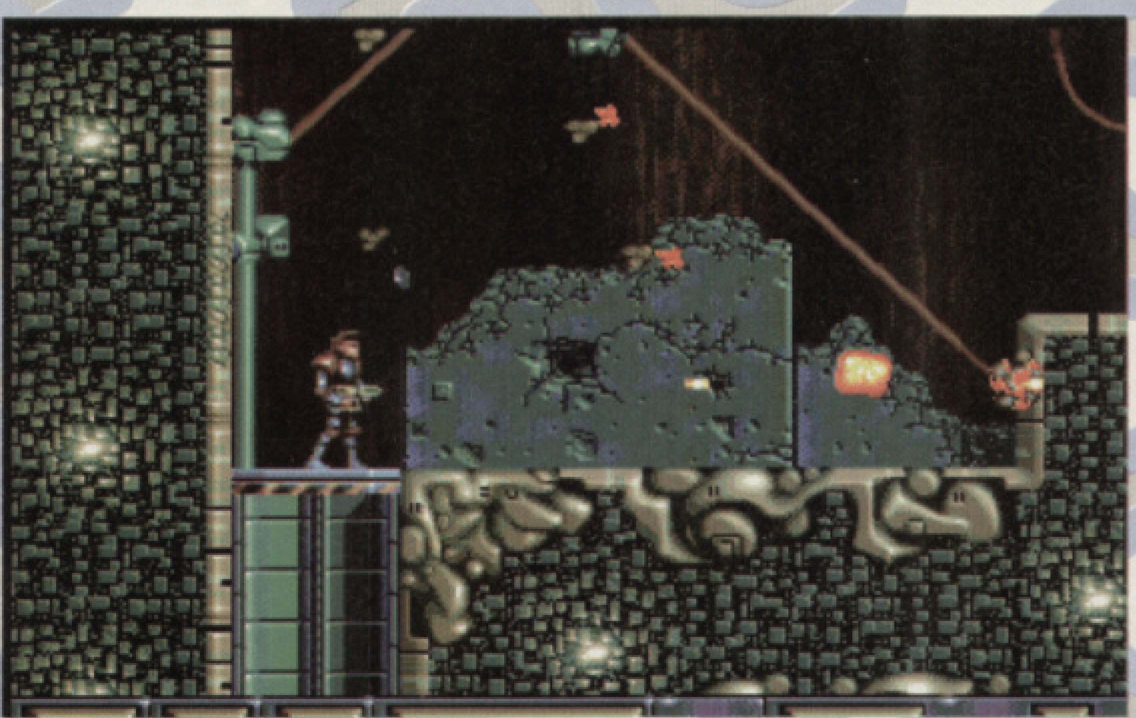
The six levels of action feature three changes of scenery. Only the first is up and running and it looks very nice, thank you, with intricate metallic bas-relief backdrops plus the heavily-armoured main character. Several weapons will be programmed into the game, which will be needed with this amount of sprites flying around screen.

Hardcore is determinedly non-linear in design, making players think their way through the game. Access to different areas of the base depends on finding and activating door switches, and some of the base defenders appear as characters to be rescued. Hardcore is looking lean, mean and ripe for review in a future MEAN MACHINES.





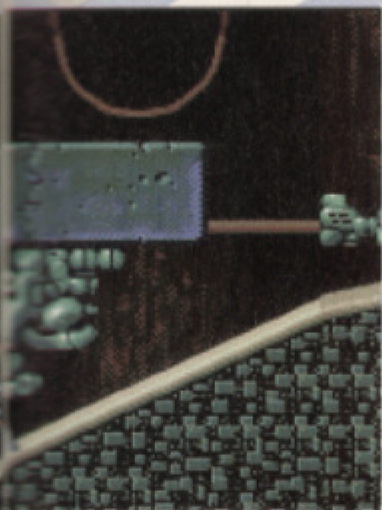




▲ *Small details abound, like using the blast doors to smash alie*

ELECTRIC DREAMS

The developers behind Hardcore are Swedish team, Illusions. An unknown quantity on the Megadrive, they have received acclaim for their Amiga pinball hits: Pinball Dreams and Pinball Fantasies (with justification, as these are ace games). With those successes behind them, they sent demos of Hardcore to a long list of UK developers. But only two bothered to contact them! The fact that one was Psygnosis delighted Illusions, who intended to develop Hardcore as a joint Megadrive/Amiga game. Project Director, Fredrik Liliegren is quick to reveal, though, how the Megadrive game has the edge over its computer rival: "you can have more things on-screen on the Megadrive than you can on the Amiga. So the Amiga version won't see quite as much action".

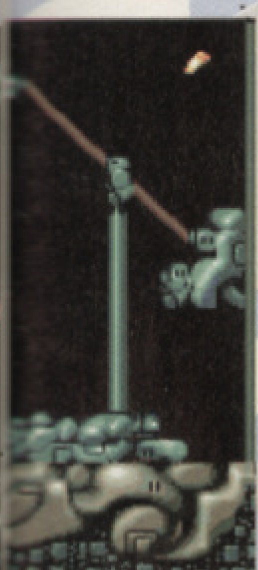


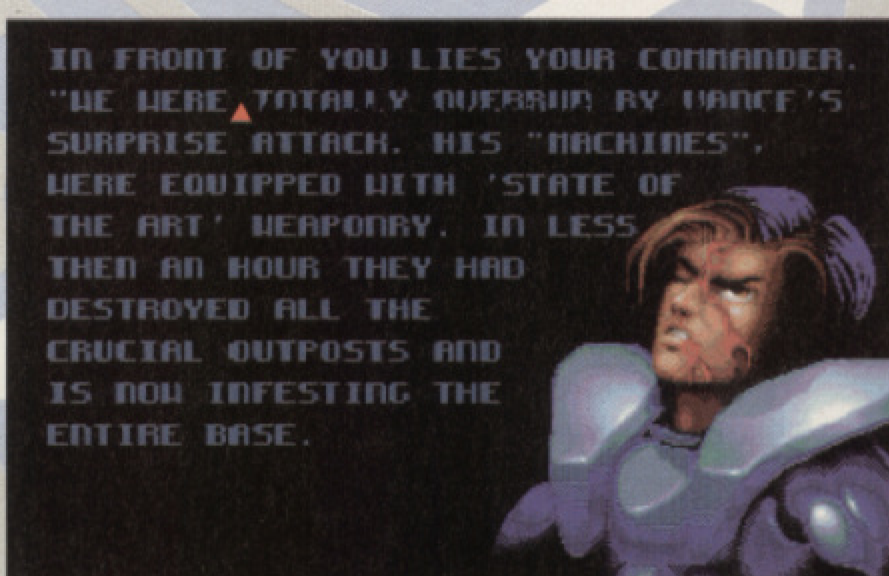
CRACKER

Hardcore is being packed full of secrets for eagle-eyed players to discover. At the moment, many power-ups are hidden in in roof caches, revealed by shooting cracks, but more devious hiding places are planned. On the first level, using baddies as stairs instead of shooting them yields rewards.



DCORE





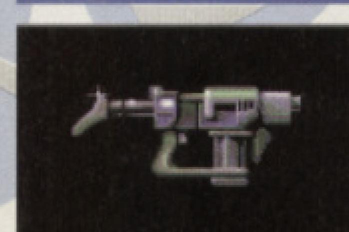
▲ *There is a story to be told, and it's revealed with these natty cut-screens.*

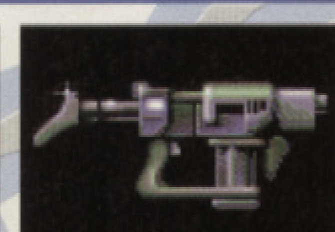




PROVISIONAL LICENCE

In addition to the side-scrolling levels, an overhead-viewed driving section is planned. This takes the form of a Jeep mounted with a large rotating cannon, and a brief to destroy everything in sight. Illusions want to make the whole background trashable, to make this section as enjoyable as possible. Concerns about memory may mean this idea only ever sees the light of day in the proposed Mega-CD version.





▲ *A selection of guns is to be offered — every one a killer, baby.*

PLAYERS	1
MEG	8
RELEASE	SEPTEMBER
BY	PSYGNOSIS
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	PLATFORM

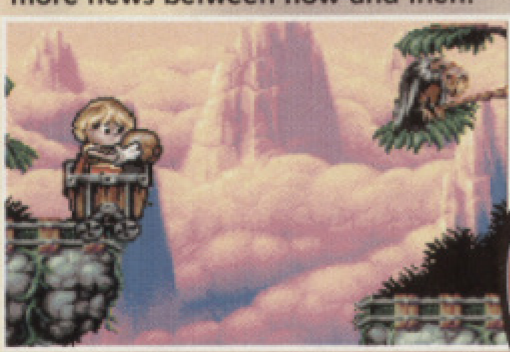
PERCENT COMPLETE

Psygnosis have got Mario in their sights as Flink, their new platform-leaping hero, makes his Megadrive debut. Originally entitled Troll, Flink first appeared in Mean Machines several months ago in our news pages. Since then, though, Flink has undergone several changes adding a more arcadey feel to its once puzzle-laden levels.



An evil demon has smothered Flink's village and the surrounding area with a blanket of smog. As a typical video game hero, Flink embarks on a mission to chase the fog back to its source, and this involves leaping and jumping his way to the end of each scrolling stage. As he does so, he encounters the locals who have been turned into maniacs by the fog, and these must be avoided or killed — either by jumping on them or by lobbing objects at them. In all, Flink's journey spans six themed worlds made up of fifty-three levels, each of which throws up more and more vicious foes.

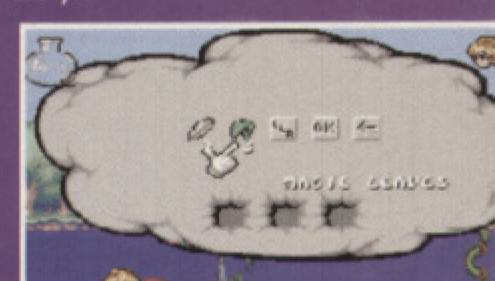
The version of the game we played was roughly 80% complete, with the main bulk of the graphics up and running. However, the game got too hard too soon and Flink's German programmers are busy tinkering with game engine to rectify the problem. Flink is set to leap on to your local software emporium's shelves sometime in September. Expect more news between now and then.

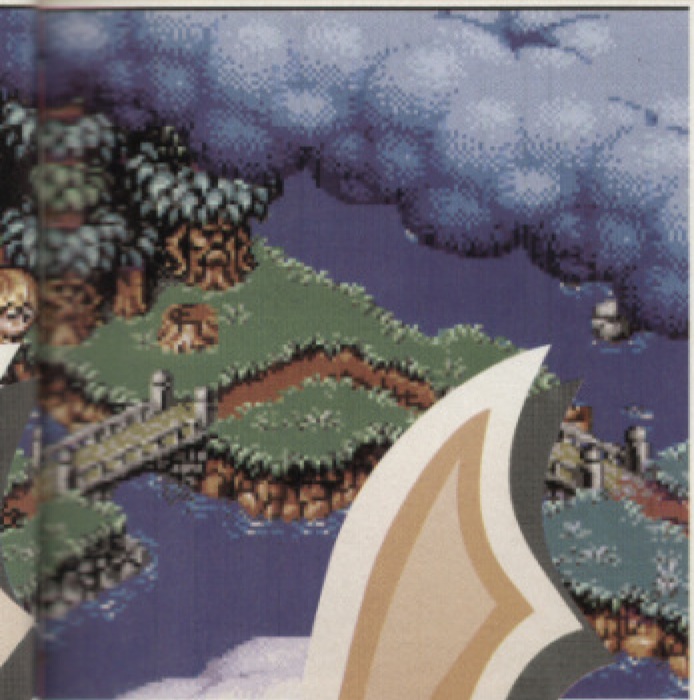


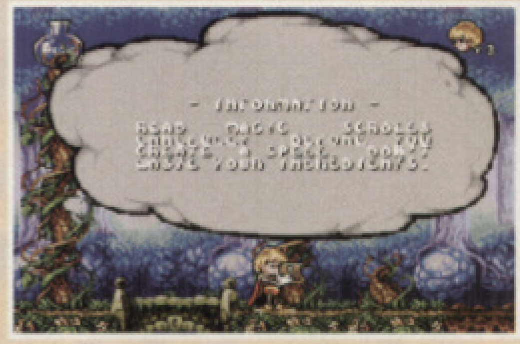


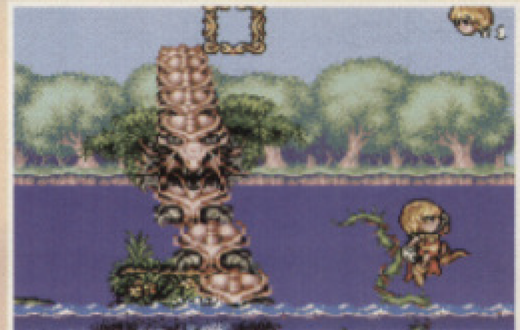
TAKE ONE EYE OF NEWT...

One of the game aspects still under considertion is Flink's spell-casting capabilities. As Flink meanders across the levels, he comes across stooped traders carrying large rucksacks on their backs. Jumping on these guys stops them in their tracks, and repeating the process adds whatever they were carrying to our hero's inventory. These items are then used at predetermined points in the game — for instance, at one stage Flink needs a shrink spell so he can enter a tiny entrance — by calling up a cauldron and mixing them together. Getting the exact recipes, however, is another story...







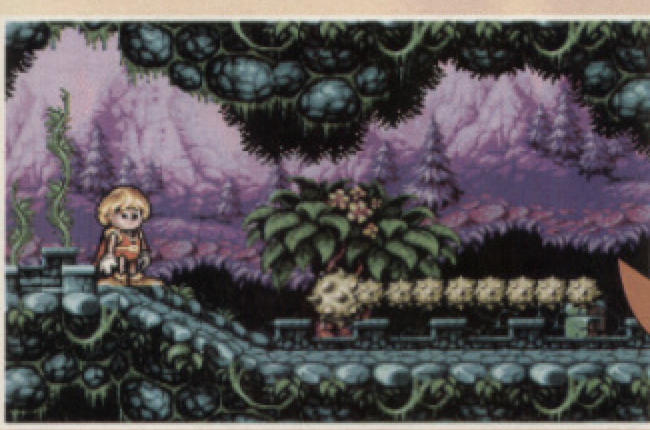


A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

The game's as yet unnamed baddie is holed up within a large volcano, which is producing the smog blighting the landscape. Flink's quest starts in the forest near his home, but eventually takes him through some outlandish townships, a river setting, a rockface, and into the very heart of the volcano itself. As he does so, the enemies he faces alter to blend in with the environment and change from zombie-like locals to snake demons, spinning devils and shield-bearing warriors.

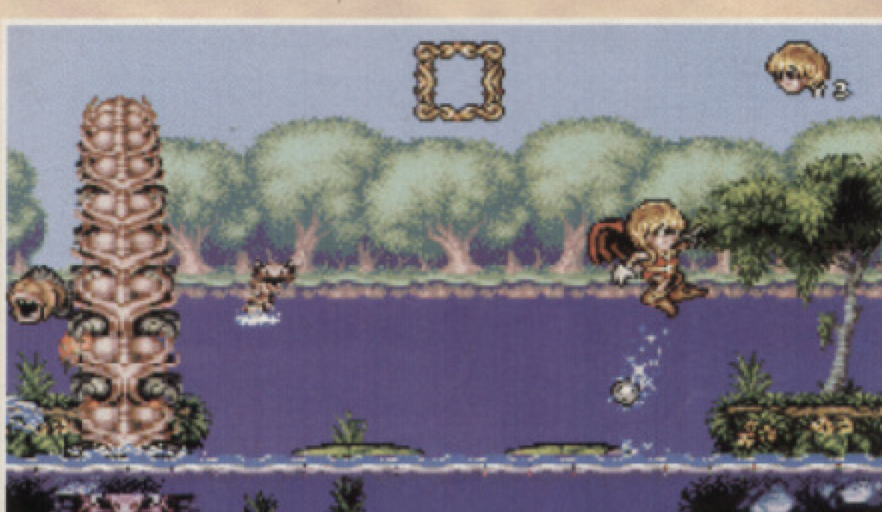






CLUES

It's obvious that the game's programmers have looked to a certain Brooklyn plumber for their inspiration — not least for Flink's wide assortment of platform styles. All your old faves are there: collapsable ledges, rotating ones, and even good old lilypads to bridge large expanses of water. Several rather neat new ideas have also been incorporated, though, including what appears to be an ordinary climbing vine, but is revealed to be a monkey's tail — with a suitably pained simian at the top!





GOAL!





Had enough of footy games yet? Virgin hope not, as they are currently just tidying up their conversion of the Amiga hit, Goal! Written by the guy responsible for Kick Off all those years ago, Dino Dini, Goal! uses the same game engine but has been tidied up for the Megadrive.



Goal! uses Kick Off's overhead viewpoint but with one major addition — the screen now zooms in and out of the action. Thus, whenever the goalie is ready to punt the ball into play, a distant view displays the position of your colleagues before the sprites are tripled in size to give a better view of the action. Similarly, should this prove too confusing, a quick prod of the Start button fixes the screen in one of the two modes.

As far as the actual action goes, Goal! is remarkably close to the excellent Amiga version of Kick Off II. Dino has opted for realistic control which keep the ball trundling ahead of a player, but has included a better trapping and passing system than US Gold's limp Super Kick Off conversion. Goal! is currently 75% complete with Dino busy adding league and cup competitions to bulk out the game. Thus, with a bit of luck, a review should be forthcoming very soon.













1-2 PLAYERS

16 MEG

RELEASE	JUNE
BY	VIRGIN
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	SPORT

PERCENT COMPLETE







SONIC THE HEDGEHOG SPINBALL™

Sega are in Sonic overdrive at the moment, with their spiky icon readying himself for two new 8bit adventures. The Master System and Game Gear versions of Sonic Chaos 2 are set to appear later this year, but handheld owners have another reason to be cheerful: the arrival of Sonic Spinball for the Game Gear.

Apart from the sub-game sections, which have been revamped, Gear Spinball is a straight conversion of the mammal-flipping hit. Robotnik has unveiled his Volcanic Veg-O Fortress, and has kidnapped even more of Moebius's cutesy inhabitants. Oddly enough, the inside of the building is made up to look like a pinball table, so Sonic balls up to bounce around the five stages between him and evil Ivo — killing Badniks as he goes.

All the usual flippers and bumpers are there, but with all-new bonus rounds adding to the action. However, whether the handheld version fares better in the lasting appeal stakes than its 16bit cousin remains to be seen. MEAN MACHINES will be revealing all very soon...

▼ *Hi, and welcome to this month's 'Spot The Hedgehog' competition.*

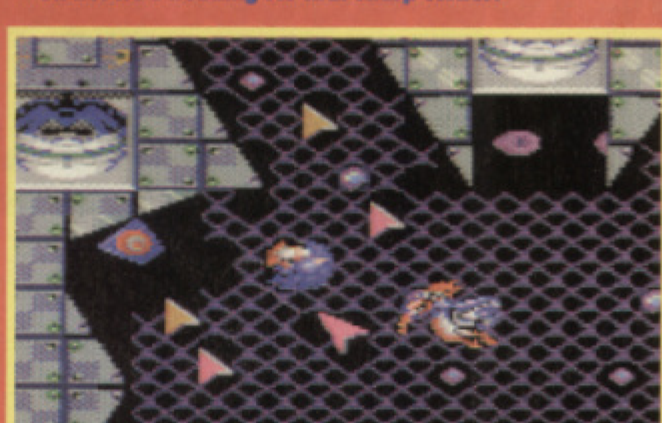


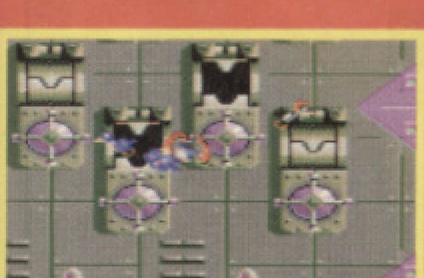


▼ *Sonic prepares to use his jumping prowess to escape into this caption space...*



▼ *Oh no! He's heading for that sharp corner!*





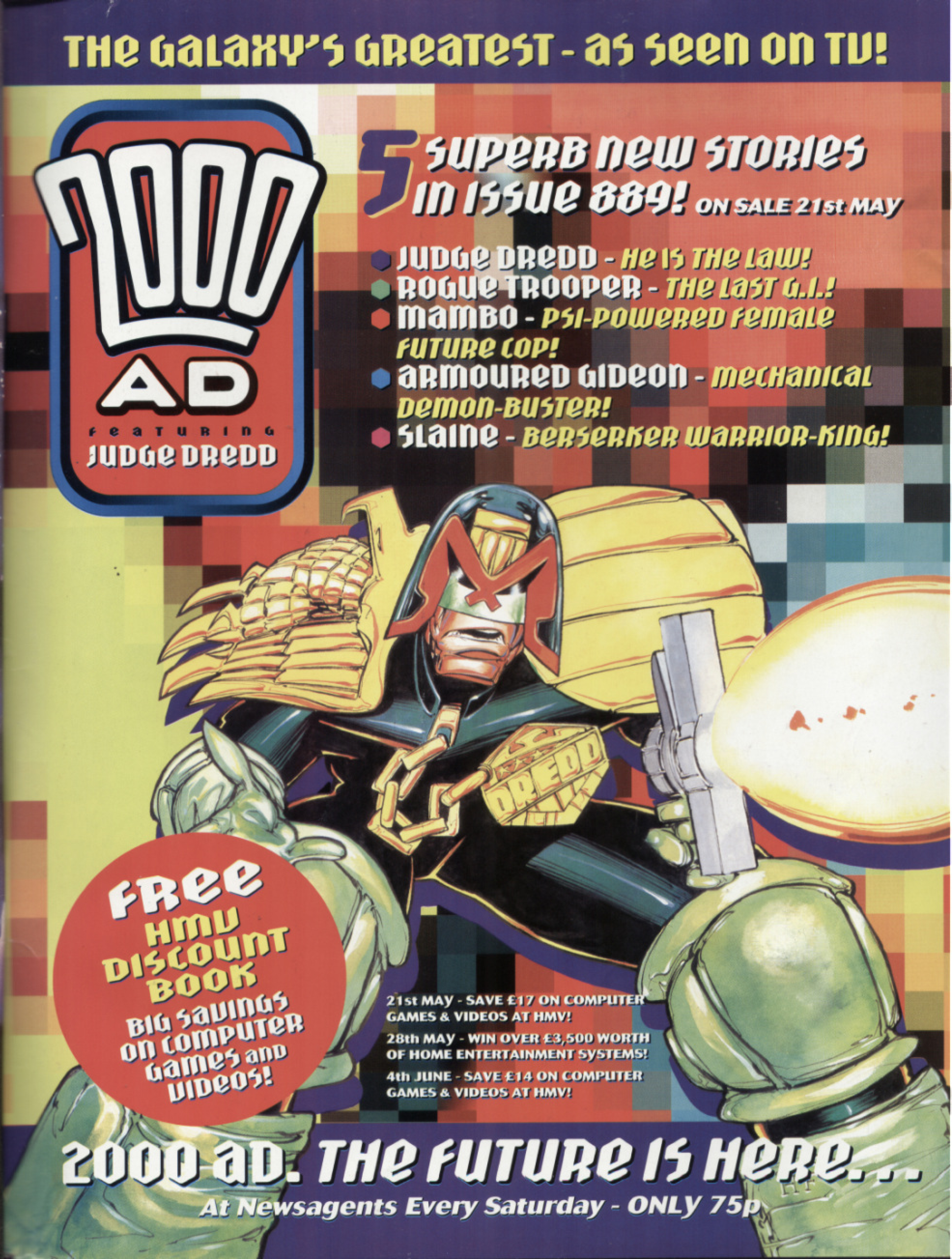
1 PLAYERS	RELEASE	MAY
	BY	SEGA
4 MEG	PRICE	TBA
	GAME TYPE	PINBALL SIM

PERCENT COMPLETE

ADVERTISER INDEX



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